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# **FREEDOM, RELIGION & REALITY.**

*(Essays on Liberal Religious Thought)*

**EDITED BY**

**G. Y. CHITNIS**

**1927**



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## FOREWORD

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It is not a rare experience to find that there is more helpfulness in the world than one is apt to think of. This is just our experience on the present occasion. To invite contributions to this memorial volume, we resolved with some diffidence to search for contributors as far and wide as we could think of. The response we have received has more than justified our expectations. In the result we are able to present to our readers, a volume which is well worthy of their perusal. For this our sincere thanks are due to those of our contributors who are not members of this Samaj. To the member contributors themselves what they have done to enrich the pages of this volume, has been a work of love for which they expect no thanks.

To one and all the members of this Samaj, the volume is of inestimable value as strengthening their conviction of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man, for however differently described and differently worshipped, it is the same God who reveals himself to his creatures and the same human spirit that gives expression to the deepest longings of the heart, in external acts of devotion.

V. G. BHANDARKAR.

## CONTENTS

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Foreword     ...     ...     ...     ...	V. G. Bhandarkar.
Worship and Fellowship     ...     ...	J. Estlin Carpenter.
The Position of the Prarthana Samaj in the Religious World     ...     ...	R. G. Bhandarkar.
Modernism in the Church of England	J. S. Bezzant.
Theism of Ramanuja; some Problems	S. Radhakrishnan.
The Faith of the Brahma Samaj     ...	G. Y. Chitnis.
The Islamic Revival     ...     ...	Mahomed Ali.
Judaism     ...     ...     ...     ...	Rebecca Reuben.
Bahai Revelation     ...     ...     ...	
The Ideals of the Prarthana Samaj	Y. V. Bhandarkar.
Buddhism and Modern Thought     ...	K. A. Padhye.
The Philosophy of the Upanishdas A.	
Conclusion     ...     ...     ...     ...	V. G. Bhandarkar.

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## **Worship and Fellowship.**

Message from the Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A., D.D., D. Litt., LL.D.,  
to the Members of the Bombay Prarthana Samaj.

DEAR FRIENDS IN THE SPIRIT !

On occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of your foundation you have done me the honour of asking me to write to you a few words which may serve as an introduction to your volume of commemoration and hope. It is well to look back and call to mind the labours of those who planted and watered the seed of faith and work now flourishing in your midst ; it is well also to look forward to new enterprise and endeavour in the constant warfare with ignorance and sin.

During the period surveyed in this volume you have seen vast changes all around you. Your city has grown immensely in size and population. Stately buildings line its front and dignify its streets. It has become the centre of a continual expansion of industry ; the establishment of factories, the development of commerce, the increase of shipping, have enormously increased its wealth. It has become the meeting-point of East and West, the gate through which India and Europe reach out to each other.

In the turmoil of this incessant activity you have reared a home for the nurture and maintenance of the spiritual life. What do you carry forward out of the experience which you have gained, as you step forth upon the unknown future?

The Jubilee period which you now complete is but a brief hour compared with the long history of your past. You are confronted not only by the materialism of a busy age of production, but also by the prevailing force of a complex religious and social tradition. In your midst are the temples of hereditary worship. Emblems and images invite attention and respect. Ancient rites still exercise on thousands of minds their compelling power, and usages of immemorial antiquity still mould the conduct and shape the social practice of multitudes around you. From this tradition you have bravely separated yourselves. You have renounced its idolatries and bidden farewell to its gods; you have broken its ties of caste, and claimed the rights of liberty. It was not always easy; you had sometimes to turn your backs on venerable associations, and endure reproach from those whom you loved and honoured. Yet in the higher teachings of sages and seers there is much which you have been able to assimilate, and your own religious life is supported by age-long habits of piety in the many branches of your race. Moreover you have seen the disciples of other leaders in the past, beyond your own borders, cherishing among you their own sacred names, Zarathustra, Jesus,

Mohammed, pursuing their own teachings and offering them to you. You have found much therein which is more or less common with your own, much which you could receive with sympathy, respect, or admiration; but you have naturally followed the paths opened by your own modern prophets, Ram Mohan Roy, Debendranath Tagore, Keshub Chunder Sen, and their successors. With their help you have found in the world of power, beauty, and order, in which we live, the manifestation of One sublime God; and in the mind and heart within the witness of the soul to his ever present Wisdom, his everlasting Righteousness, his eternal Love.

To such a Being we must needs look up in humility and adoration. So you called the little company which was first gathered out of the surrounding crowds an 'Assembly for Prayer,' a congregation for worship, a community for devotion and the nurture of the spiritual life. You have realised that one side of our nature confronts what Emerson once called 'the deeps of being,' and as long as we keep an open way, unbarred by selfishness or mistrust, their tides flow in on us with quickening power. You have learned that as God is Spirit, and we are Spirit too, on one part of our nature, we are not separate or cut off from him. God *is*, that he may ever give himself to his creations. He guides and upholds the world that he has made, prepares it for life, arrays it in verdure, peoples its solitudes,

and leads the great procession of their kinds up to the full-grown man, in whose breast he deigns to make at once his temple and his home. He will not indeed *compel* us to his service. He respects, if we may dare so to phrase it, the freedom of the spirits he has produced. He invites us into his fellowship, he offers us the privileges of his sympathy, the support of his righteousness, the strength of his joy. He calls us to be fellow workers with him in the making of good in the world which but for us would not be made at all. It is a sublime energy with which he thus entrusts us. We are more than a mere sport of the Almighty. He bids us learn to rule and guide ourselves. Every base impulse mastered, every enfeebling habit overcome, every rude passion controlled, every mean or malicious suggestion driven from the mind, counts for something in the world's history. It is something done, and the deed lasts. A victory has been gained over evil; it is cast out, and purity and right are established in its place. From hour to hour, from day to day, from year to year, we are laying up strength with which to meet the temptations of selfishness or insincerity, or we are letting ourselves go, scattering our resources, or lapsing into indifference and guilt.

Against this danger we may protect ourselves by seeking the help of the Power which has made us. We do not struggle by ourselves, alone. In the anguish of bereavement or the poignancy of repent-

ance we may bow ourselves before the compassion or the holiness of God, at once so near us and so far above us. But we have common needs, common blessings, common affections, common trials, and for these it is natural that we should ask for aid or utter thanks together. For worship is the lowly effort by which the soul seeks to set itself consciously before its Maker, its Judge, its Deliverer from sin, its Guide to righteousness, in all those intimate and searching relations which we sum up under the one name 'Father.' There is the guarantee of our nature, there the pledge of our future; in that august connexion lies the hope of immortality; and there in our sincerest moments we touch our highest, and make the resolves which decide for us issues of life.

Such worship rises out of many lesser moods; out of the admiration with which we gaze upon some scene of loveliness, or recognise the beauty of some holy soul beside us, long hidden from our eyes; or out of the reverence begotten by deeds of self-sacrificing love, by difficult witness for truth, by trustful endurance of pain: whatever wakens in us the perception of character loftier than our own, of a nature living habitually upon the heights, calls us to bow before what we have not attained. But the worship of God strives to mount higher yet. It is no distant homage to an invisible right. It is more than the upward look towards an ideal. It is the approach to an encompassing spirit. It is the opening of the heart in thankfulness to the Giver of all



good. It is the lowly submission of our thoughts and desires beneath the eye of the All-Pure. It is the cry wrung from the depth of suffering for patience and for peace. It is the appeal for guidance in perplexity, for strength in weakness, for support in trial. And all this is the personal speech of heart to Heart, of mind to Mind, of soul to Soul, where wants are uttered and supplied, where unseen influences pass to cleanse and quicken, to help and cheer, and we know that the Father has laid his power on us in blessing and has heard our prayer.

This is worship in spirit, and to prepare yourselves for it is the function of your community. It may, indeed, be true that in the daily custom of our lives we do not meet a poignant crisis once a week. We cannot run through the whole scale of spiritual emotion at any fixed and regular intervals. But it is no less true that if we do not make devotion a part of the constant practice of our lives, we shall find in our hour of need that we are incapable of any spiritual emotion at all. The power that environs us will have us in its grip. We shall feel its pressure, but it will be nothing but a cold dead force. We shall see no face behind it looking on us with love. Live to yourselves, you may have your satisfactions for a time, but you must pay their price. Starve the energies of your spirit, shroud them in indifference, smother them in convention, neglect their promptings, quench their aspirations, and you cannot regain them suddenly when their vigour is gone.

The world will be for you one huge blank, a vast machine for frustrating expectation and baffling desire. If you have taken its gifts without acknowledgment, have accumulated its bounties for yourself and transmitted none of them to others, do not expect an answer to your complaints when they fail. You have received your good gifts without thankfulness; lament is useless when they are withdrawn; you are stripped and shivering, and alone.

Bear then unceasingly your witness to the lofty truths of God, his perpetual creativeness, his wisdom, order, and beneficence, his august righteousness, his abounding love. Cherish and support each other in the hours of worship when you meet to lay your lives before him and with thanksgiving and prayer seek his guidance and help. But it is not enough that you should thus assemble for mutual encouragement in common trust and resolves. All round about you are multitudes engaged in the unceasing labours of the common lot, to whom the great words God, Spirit, Immortality, have no meaning. Engaged in daily toil, living in crowded homes, they remain unawakened to the wonder and beauty of the world as we know it, unconscious of the capacities and privileges hidden in their own souls. It has been your aim to let in the light. In your Evening Schools you have sought to carry what you have learned into the hearts and dwellings of the poor the ignorant, the suffering. These efforts necessarily

involve self-sacrifice. They are your contribution to the common good, the fulfilment of God's purpose for man. The appeal comes to you from tens of thousands in this city who have not had your opportunities, 'Help us to better life; teach us to understand ourselves; show us the way of knowledge, the path of uprightness; open to us the treasures of ancient insight, the brave deeds of heroes, the purity of saints; make us sharers in your vision, quicken us with your love.' The future of your movement largely depends on your answer to such an appeal. Be not heedless of it. If your own energy languishes, you will have no enlightening message to carry abroad. Out of the feelings of gratitude and hope awakened by your Jubilee will you not press on more steadfastly to enlarging achievement and more abundant victories over evil? The personal satisfactions of spiritual religion are not enough to hold you together against the conflicts and ambitions, the dangers, the tyrannies and troubles, of the world. Its sorrows must be comforted, its wounds healed, its errors corrected, its faults amended, its sins purified. May the Heavenly Father sustain you as you address yourselves to his service with fresh zeal and power.

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## **The Position of the Prarthana Samaj in the Religious World.**

(The late Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, M.A., PH.D., LL.D., K.C.I.E.)

We are surrounded by men who profess Mahomedanism, Christianity, Hinduism in its various forms and phases, Buddhism and Jainism. What relation does the religion of the Prarthana Samaj bear to these is the question to be discussed. To arrive at something like a satisfactory conclusion, we must cast a glance at the history and evolution of religion from the earliest times to the present. The leading thinkers of Europe have recently formulated what is called the science of religion. The object of this science is to collect information about all religions that have prevailed and do prevail, and to trace the evolution of religion from the primitive form in which it was professed by savages to the highest that has been presented to us by Christianity or I may say by the religion of the Upanishads and the Bhagvadgita. The conclusion arrived at is that one same principle like a seed has been developing in a variety of forms corresponding to the branches of the tree which spring up from the tree. The essence of the religion has been con-

sidered to consist in a belief in some higher power, which may be benevolent or malevolent to man. In both cases, however, the belief is that the power can be made favourable to man's purposes, if proper methods are followed, which methods are believed to be communicated by the power itself. Revelation thus comes in even in the earliest form of religion.

The constituents of religion have been given by Professor Tiele as emotions, conceptions, sentiments, words and deeds. Emotion is that which moves a man towards that spiritual condition which we call religious. It may be man's feeling of dependence upon an external power, or a perception of the grandeur of nature or the transitoriness of the world. When man's mind is, by any such emotion, directed towards religion, he necessarily forms some conception of the nature of the higher power which he worships. The power may be conceived as a spirit dwelling in a natural object or a spirit free to move about, or a spirit presiding over a phenomenon of nature such as thunder, rain, or wind, or an all-pervading spirit which is the ripest conception of the nature of God. Next we have sentiments, and they are love, reverence or the like. In keeping with such a sentiment, there are certain words used to propitiate the deity and bring it into man's power, such as prayers or charms, and associated with these words, there are deeds, such as the offering of sacrifices and various other modes of conducting

worship. In every one of the various forms of religion that have existed, we can discover these five constituents.

The question is asked why it is that man's spirit thinks at all of religion. Professor Max Muller as well as Professor Tiele say that there is a vague sense of the infinite in man. He is not content with things as they are, but always looks for something beyond. Looking for something beyond, therefore, whenever he observes any operation in the external world, he traces to such a power as he himself is conscious of in his own nature, *viz.*, the power of will. Thus behind the external operation he discovers a Will, that is, a Willing Spirit. This is a rudiment of religion which develops in the course of man's history. In the earliest form this spirit is believed to dwell in such objects as trees and rocks. A further step in the progress is to believe that the spirit is not confined to a particular thing but is free to move. Sometimes such a spirit is looked upon as being forced to live in a certain object and that object is believed to afford protection and work miracles. It then becomes fetish. The various phenomena of nature are personified and believed to proceed from the will of certain spirits such as Agni, Vayu, Indra, Varuna, etc. These personified deities assume definite character and then they are believed to be gods and afterwards are located in a certain happy place called heaven. The Vedic conception of the deities or the Greek or the Roman conceptions.

represent this stage of progress. In the course of time as we see in the Vedas, these different gods are considered to be but mere names. The various phenomena over which they are considered to preside come to be attributed to one power, and thus dawns the conception of one supreme spirit who has created the heaven and the earth.

Even from the beginning a sort of morality becomes connected with religion. Savages have certain customs which, if they violate, will, they believe, bring upon them the wrath of the spirit whom they worship. Then as man's knowledge of the world develops and he progresses in civilisation, higher moral conceptions are developed, and these are considered to be representing the will of their gods. In the course of man's history certain religions came to be deliberately founded with the object of creating a moral revolution such as Buddhism and Christianity.

Sometimes the development takes different directions amongst different races. Thus the might and the inscrutable nature of God are emphasised in the Semetic religions. Names are given to God which are significant of his Lordship or Sovereignty and with reference to which his worshippers are called servants or slaves. Amongst the Aryans the name that we prominently find is Dyaspitar amongst the Vedic Indians, Zeus-Pater amongst the Greeks and Jupiter amongst the Romans. It means "Father in Heaven". From this and the various

other modes in which the deity is named and addressed, the idea most emphasised by the Aryans appears to be that God is our father and we are his children. Amongst both races these ideas have become corrupt, the former having led men to the propagation of their religion by the shedding of blood, and the latter to the attributing of the lowest human qualities to God. Various other characteristics are presented by this evolution of religion, but we must not stop to go over them. It would be sufficient to say that the evolution is towards a clearer and clearer realisation of the idea of the Infinite that was implicit in the beginning, leading men to find God everywhere and to form a conception of perfect holiness.

The conceptions and the other constituents of religion that I have mentioned, the Prarthana Samaj adopts from the most developed forms of religion as contained in the Upanishads, and the Bhagvadgita, in the Bible or in the literature of the progressive religious thought of the day. We believe God to be immanent in the world directing the process of physical and spiritual evolution that has ever been going on. This is an idea adopted by the advanced religious philosophy of the day and there is a shade of it in the Upanishads :—"That soul who is awake, while all the rest are asleep, creating as he wills, is the light, is Brahma; that alone is called the immortal. All worlds (or beings) find their support in him; none can transgress him." The great soul, the



Lord, brings forth good." "He evolves righteousness and drives away sin." We believe that God's dwelling "is the light of setting sun, and the round ocean and living air, and the blue sky and in the mind of man," and he is, "a motion and a spirit, that impels all thinking things, all objects of all thoughts, and rolls through all things." And the Brihadaran-yaka tells us, "He is the inward controlling soul who, dwelling in the earth, the waters, fire, ether, air, the sun, the moon, the stars, the quarters, lightning, thunder, all worlds, all Vedas, all sacrifices, all beings, the breath, speech, the eye, the ear, the mind, the skin, light, darkness, seminal fluid, and the soul (of individual), is different from them, whom these do not know, whose body all these are, and who controls these from the inside." Similarly the Bhagvadgita says, "God dwells in the heart of all beings, and placing them as on a wheel moves them by his wonderful power." Another constituent of religion, the sentiments are with us ; those of reverence and love; and our words and deeds which together make up our worship are fervent prayers, an attitude of humility, an unquestioning faith, self-surrender, a readiness to follow where God leads, contemplation, mutual converse, love of man and loving acts and fidelity to truth. All these have been taught to us by the Bhagvadgita, by Christ, and in an impressive manner by our own Tukaram.

I have already observed in the beginning that it is of the essence of the religious belief that

religion should be regarded as revealed by the higher power that it worships. This belief can, I believe, stand the test of reason. If Lord Kelvin has told us that evolution in external nature is under the direction of a higher power should we not consider the evolution of religion also to be under the direction of that power? Hence our doctrine and belief is that God has been leading men from the time when they were in the primitive condition to the present day towards the realisation of higher and higher religious truth. The evolution of religion means a continuous revelation.

There is also another sense in which religious evolution must be considered a revelation. Just as in the case of a poet or an artist there are flashes of light which he gives expression to, by means of words or colour, so also in the case of certain individuals there are flashes of religious truth which those individuals convey to others less gifted. Our own Tukaram says in one place, "What possibility is there that an insignificant person like myself should speak such words? It is the sustainer of the universe that made me speak;" and in another, "I have broken open the treasure, the things belong to the Lord, and I am simply a porter to carry them to you"; and in another Abhang he says, "I have been sent to communicate the message." When Tukaram gives expression to such ideas as these, are we to consider that he is telling lies? Certainly not. He says so because he really did see the flashes of

light of which ordinary men have no experience. It is in this special sense, therefore, that the religious evolution is under the direction of God.

If, therefore, the doctrines adopted by the Prarthana Samaj are those found in the most developed forms of religion, be sure our religion is a revealed religion. It also is a revealed religion in two special senses. It is the only religion that acknowledges the influence and hand-work of God in all the religious that existed or now exist ; and, therefore, imposes on us an attitude of sympathy towards all religious beliefs while hitherto antipathy between different religions has been the general rule. And the study of all these religions had the effect of clearing the religious vision so as to enable the leaders of the Samaj to distinguish between truth and falsehood and has led them to adopt the highest form of truth that has ever dawned upon the human mind. It is in these two special senses that the dispensation followed by the Prarthana Samaj may be considered a New Dispensation.

Here then is a religion which God himself has placed before us in the fulness of time when all the races of the world have come together and have been as it were comparing notes. The question is whether you will adopt this new revelation, the main doctrines of which are, however, those of the most highly developed religions which for this country may be considered to be those of the Upanishads, and the Bhagvadgita and of the teachings of saints

and prophets like Tukaram. Will you then accept the best portions of the Upanishads, the Bhagvad-gita, and of the teachings of the medieval saints supplemented by certain ideas from Buddhism or from the Bible ; or will you adhere to all the religions that go under the name of ordinary Hinduism, the religion, which represents all the stages of evolution beginning from the most primitive such as the worship of trees and stones, serpents and cows, and of fetishes ? Will you accept mere mechanical ceremonials which can have no connection with your moral advancement as your worship of God, or take up the spiritual mode chosen by the Prarthana Samaj, which alone is calculated to purify the heart and elevate it and prepare you to perform your duties in life ? The existing forms of religion belonging as they do to earlier stages of civilisation are destined, if India is to advance, to disappear, and along with their disappearance, all that is good in the higher religious thought of the country is also in danger of disappearing, unless we deliberately choose it and make it alone our religion. The existing mechanical modes of worship must be entirely thrown away and the spiritual mode substituted, to bring about the moral reformation of the country which is so urgently needed.

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## **Modernism in the Church of England.**

[The Rev. J. S. Bezzant, M.A., Vice-Principal, Ripon Hall, Oxford.]

Modernism is not modern. It is merely the modern name for the age-long attempt, made from within the Christian Church, to love God with the *mind*. Modernism is not the creation of people called modernists. It is simply the result of new methods and new knowledge in the natural sciences, in history, and in psychology. As such it is the result of the inevitable working of the mind with which God has endowed man, and therefore God himself may be said to be the author of it. Modernism asserts that the conclusions of experts in the various branches of knowledge must be accepted by the Christian theologian, who must not dictate opinions on matters in which he is not qualified to judge ; rather, in so far as theology makes propositions which involve statements concerning science and history, the form of these propositions must be in accordance with the best available scientific and historical knowledge and if need be, must be from time to time modified or abandoned in order to be in harmony with such scientific and historical knowledge.

It is therefore at once clear why those who regard the Christian religion as a number of fixed and for ever unalterable propositions which ought

to be believed by everyone who desires or has any right to the Christian name, regard modernism as destructive and negative, interested only in denial, and standing for a 'reduced' Christianity. The modernist flatly denies that Christianity is a matter of intellectual propositions whether many or few. He asserts that it is faith in a person, the acceptance of the standard of values represented by Jesus Christ and the Cross, in the sure and certain hope that ultimately these will triumph. For the modernist Christianity is the possession of a spirit, the striving after a moral and spiritual ideal. It is possible to believe much without believing many things. Modernism is not concerned primarily with conclusions. It stands for an attitude of mind—the open mind, which does not mean the vacant mind. It stands for modern methods of study and claims that the heart of the Christian message needs to be expressed for each generation in accordance with the best knowledge of the age.

There is nothing new in this attitude or in this claim. It is the attitude of the New Testament itself. The first disciples of Jesus were Jews, and rather simple Jews; their outlook was correspondingly crude. They expected, almost hourly, the return in glory upon the clouds of heaven of the Jesus whom they had known. Theirs was a type of Christianity which would have been meaningless in the Hellenistic world, and in fact, as soon as Christianity spread from Galilee and Jerusalem into

the Greek world, it assumed a Hellenistic shape. The process of development can be traced within the pages of the New Testament. It culminates in the writer of the Gospel according to *St. John*,\* who reinterprets the primitive Christian theology in the light of the doctrine of Logos. *St. John* was the first great modernist, and he has been followed by a long and illustrious line of teachers who have attempted to do for their own time what *St. John* did for his.

For the modernist, there are no external infallible authorities, whether societies or books, which can tell him what to believe in such a way as to exclude questioning. In the last resort, the modernist holds that all we have to guide us in this life are reason and conscience, and neither of them is infallible. The modernist does not ignore the convictions which have moulded the thought of past generations, nor is he an individualist; he hesitates to affirm the correctness of opinions which seem to conflict with those of the great multitude whom no man can number of those who have lived in the spirit of Christ, but he recognises that piety alone is quite an inadequate qualification for pronouncing upon matters of historical and scientific criticism. Hence, for the modernist, there are [no infallibilities, and he is therefore opposed to theological dogmatism. Herein he is in harmony with the spirit

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\* I use the name as indicating the Fourth Gospel, but without implying anything as to the identity of the author.

of the Church of England, which in the 21st of her Articles of Religion states that even General Councils "may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining to God." The Church of England makes no claim to be free from error when she asserts that the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome have erred in matters of Faith : (Article xix), she gives as her reason for accepting the three creeds, 'that they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture.' (Article viii.)

Now the basis, the justification, and the necessity of modernism in the English Church is the revolution which has taken place, during the last seventy years, in the attitude towards the Bible. This change of attitude is due partly to the advances in scientific knowledge of the world, but particularly to the modern scientific study of history which has profoundly influenced almost every activity of the mind. For centuries, the Bible has been regarded as either entirely infallible, or at least as its own sufficient guarantee of the truth of its contents. It is now known to be otherwise. It can no longer afford an infallible sanction for any statements to which it testifies, or to any deductions based upon its testimony. Its statements may be true, or they may be false, or partly true and partly false, but judgment must be determined by the ordinary canons employed in judging of the classes of phenomena to which they severally belong. It is obvious that the



effects of such a revolutionary change of view must be very far-reaching. It can no longer be felt that the Bible contains definite beliefs about God, about Jesus, about morals, about ecclesiastical order and organization *which are therein set forth with the infallible authority of God*. The frank acceptance of this attitude towards the Bible is the one principle common to modernists and it is to-day accepted by multitudes who are not called modernists. Whatever may be the case in America, there is no University in the British Isles wherein the old view of the Bible is taught nor any teacher of any influence whatsoever who teaches it. The difference is between those who accept the implications of the changed conditions and those who do not. Many of those called "Anglo-Catholics" and many of those called "Evangelicals" do accept these implications;\* others, such as Dr. Darwell Stone, a respected leader of a large section of the Anglo-Catholics (but not of the younger men) do not accept them. Dr. Stone recognises that *some* Anglo-Catholics have accepted historical and critical methods of Biblical study and have found no difficulty in fitting the new opinions into their theological belief. But he makes the theological beliefs his real foundation, not the Scripture which was historically so largely the foundation of those beliefs. Modernists hold that the beliefs, the historical basis

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\* See the two composite books "*Essays Catholic and Critical*." (S. P. C. K. 1926.) and "*Liberal Evangelicalism*" (Hodder and Stoughton, 1923.)

of which has been so radically changed, must be reformulated. What is remarkable in England to-day is not the rapid growth of modernist organization, but the wide dissemination of its spirit. The majority of the younger educated clergy to-day are modernist in spirit if not in name.

Modernism in the English Church is something very different from the movement in the Roman Catholic Church to which the name modernism was first applied, though both movements were originated by the same causes. The difference between them lies in their respective treatments of the question of the place of history in Christian theology, and, in particular, of their respective valuations of the significance of the earthly life of Jesus Christ. For Roman Catholic modernism the earthly life of Jesus hardly matters at all ; it makes no difference whether Jesus was, even for the standards of his own day, a person of limited intelligence, or even of limited goodness, or whether he mistakenly supposed himself to be chosen by God as Messiah shortly to appear in glory to apportion the destinies of the human race. What is important is what, in fact, during twenty centuries of history, Christianity has actually become. The important thing is not the earthly life of Jesus, but the excellence of the Christ-ideal, which certainly exists in the Church, however it has come to be there. Modernism in the Church of England differs fundamentally from this point of view—a point of view, however, which is by no

means regarded altogether unfavourably by the younger generation of Anglo-Catholic scholars. English modernists, of course, agree that in any case the Christ ideal has come to be, and will remain, as the ideal of human life, whatever be the truth about the actual earthly life of Jesus ; but they are equally certain that the *person of Jesus* can only remain central in, or even of interest to, Christian theology in so far as history can show them an earthly Jesus whom they can rationally and morally judge to be worthy of that position. Unless history shows Jesus to be such an one, then with whatever glories devotion may have surrounded him, English modernism would cease to be greatly interested in the person of Jesus. English modernism claims that history *does* show Jesus to be worthy of the central place—the supreme place—in God's self-revelation to man. Like *St. John*, they believe that in him the ideal became actual, and lived on earth a human life, real in whatever sense we may be thought to be living real human lives. English modernism asserts that in Jesus Christ the nature of God has been supremely revealed to man ; that in him we see the most perfect revelation in time of the Eternal, though inevitably limited by the temporal conditions of earthly life in the Palestine of the first century. English modernism will stand or fall by the maintenance of this position. It is, therefore, Christo-centric. It does not mean that in the teaching of Jesus there is contained infallible me-

taphysical information about God, or that his moral teaching supplies a code of rules of conduct which we have simply to obey unquestioningly ; but it *does* mean that in Jesus we see an attitude to God, to man, to the joys and troubles of life than which we can conceive no greater. For the modernist the surpassing beauty of the animating spirit of Jesus is such that he feels he can say nothing greater of the nature of God than that it is like the nature of Jesus. Modernists do not claim that this revelation of God in Christ solves for them all problems in the world and out of it ; but they do claim that it points the way in which alone there is any hope of solving them. Take the problem of pain. The modernist knows pain to be a bad, and sin to be a worse, evil, and he rejects every sophistry which tries to make them anything else. But he realizes that if it be regarded as conceivable that it is the purpose of God to shape human souls through conquest of uncertainty, difficulty, pain, and evil, these things, though their nature remains the same, are nevertheless means to a greater good than could be attained without them. And they see in Jesus, who had taught them to think of God as a loving Father, one who himself encountered in a terrible form most of the experiences which have led men to deny the goodness and the love of God. *He* suffered : why should not they suffer ? They see in Jesus the highest they know, and he shared to the full in the world's suffering ; believing him to reveal the nature of God, modern-

ists think of the Divine nature as sharing in the world's sorrow, and that not merely as a temporary incident in a certain historical situation. They do not claim this as a certainty, and in any case they are sure that little of what is great in life is capable of intellectual demonstration. It is their faith, which is neither a makeshift for knowledge nor opinion based on insufficient evidence, but trust in God and in goodness and in the hope that ultimately the best, not the worst, in the Universe is the most real. Hence modernists stress the need of accepting Christ's revelation of God as a *working* hypothesis, for in the end we can only *know* what we arrive at by our own experience. In Christian theology no question is so important as that of Christology, and when modernists say that Jesus reveals to them the nature of God supremely they mean just this: that in so far as his life and ideals are not only pondered and understood intellectually, but are set as the practical guide for human life, we arrive at a richer and more worthy conception of God than this world elsewhere affords.

As for the theology of the doctrine of the incarnation, modernists in the English Church regard it as they regard other metaphysical dogmas. For them it is simply the best attempt to express the truth about Jesus in the philosophical terminology of the date of its foundation. It is an attempt to express intellectually the *mode* of the incarnation. Modernists regard such questions, not as unimport-

ant, but as secondary. In some ways they prefer to express their own beliefs, which they honestly believe to preserve all that is of value in the ancient formularies, in other terms. They are not pantheists. They believe that God is the Creator of the ends of the earth, on whom men and all things else depend, every moment of their existence; that he is *other* than the souls whom he has made. But they are unable to accept a belief which assumes a vast gulf between the *nature* of God and the *nature* of man. If this Gulf is stressed, it becomes difficult to see how man could ever know God at all, since only like can know like. Modernists marvel, not only that God should reveal himself, but that man should be able to comprehend anything of such revelation. They accept the implications of *both* marvels, not only those of one of them. Hence they incline to assert that in all men there is some incarnation of the Divine, which was supremely incarnated in Jesus. They cannot say that *only* in Jesus is the Divine incarnate. Modernists accept experience and its implications; however hard it may be to reconcile them they will never deny experience in order to maintain a theory. In all such questions as to whether there be a second Divine existence side by side with God, the Father, distinct from, yet not separate from, the Father, modernists, if pressed, will confess frankly that they think the only true answer is that we do not know. Certainly modernists do not know, and they are fairly sure that no

one else knows either. As for the question as to whether there may some day be expected a fuller incarnation than that they see in Jesus, they feel it is of academic rather than of practical importance. It is to them, rather like asking if man will ever evolve a conception of a higher virtue than love. In any case, we are in no sort judges beforehand. Nor are modernists alarmed by the difficulty of believing the fullest revelation of God to have occurred in the first century of our era rather than at the climax of the evolutionary process. For to suppose it could only come at that climax would be to look for it when the ideal will have been achieved without it—to look for it at the one time when it would be unnecessary and useless.

I have already insisted that modernism in the English Church is not a system of doctrine, but rather a new orientation towards dogma, and a new spirit. Though the working out of the modernist spirit as exemplified in the late Roman Catholic Father George Tyrrell is not that which commends itself to English modernists, they unhesitatingly adopt the following words of his as descriptive of the spirit and attitude of modernism.

‘ I think that the best description of modernism is that it is the desire and effort to find a new theological synthesis, consistent with the data of historico-critical research.....  
By a modernist I mean a churchman of

any sort who believes in the possibility of a synthesis between the essential truth of religion and the essential truth of modernity.'

Or, in the words of the American author of *Modernism in Religion* :

'Modernism stands for a new spirit and for modern methods in the study and teaching of religion and ethics.....It accepts the results of modern methods, and asks that they be incorporated with older views. It does not offer a new set of dogmas but it does ask for a modern interpretation of the older ones. It insists that religion is more vital than theology and must be distinguished from it. It alters our scientific, historical and theological outlook, but leaves our personal relation to Christ untouched. It is a vitalizing spirit making all things new, and an intellectual method, rather than a formulated creed. It seeks to meet difficulties already raised by our modern world-view, rather than to raise new ones.'

But modernism in England is essentially *a movement in the English Church*. Modernists are churchmen who believe in the value of a church, and who are anxious to preserve their inheritance. As Mrs. Humphrey Ward said :



‘Modernism is the attempt of the modern spirit, acting religiously, to refashion Christianity, *not outside, but inside the warm limits of the ancient churches*, to secure not a reduced, but a transformed Christianity.’

This may suggest that modernism is an easy and a shallow compromise likely at once to injure religion and to offend reason. Modernism is not a compromise at all. Whereinsoever ancient formularies are no longer accepted by modernists they demand frankly that a new interpretation of them shall be openly accepted by the Church ; where that is impossible, then, so far as they have ceased to believe in them, modernists are prepared to say so frankly and to urge their abolition as official tests of the doctrine now held by the Church. They are not unaware of the difficulties, particularly of the dangers resulting from the inevitable unsettlement of simple believers. But they feel the situation has to be faced and, and that the faith which cannot stand unsettlement is not really a strong faith. In any case, to lose the thoughtful people from a Church in the supposed interests of the simple, is finally to be rejected by both thoughtful and simple, for, however long it may be delayed, the thoughtful people do create the mental outlook of the simple. Many of the sayings of Jesus must have offended the ‘little ones’ in Judaism.

The modernist attitude is the outcome of certain convictions. Perhaps chief among these is the conviction that the old static conception of the universe is false. Modernism believes that man is involved in a vast process, of which he is both a product and a factor. It believes that the process is rational, moral, spiritual, and its faith is that ultimately the process will justify itself. The modernist believes the process to be creative ; it is ever bringing new realities into existence. He asserts that the spirit of Jesus is that which accepts the progressive revelation of God, and he is sure that it is to this, and not the words of Scripture, or to ecclesiastical pronouncements in the past, that the Church must be loyal. Hence he stresses the paramount duty of being essentially truthful in religion, which is what he understands by loving God with the mind. Words must as far as we can make them, correspond with reality and with fact. In so far as Christianity seems out of date, in opposition to science, and with 'plans of salvation' which seem empty of meaning, the modernist believes it to be due to the neglect of the progressive revelation of God, with which nothing in the spirit of the teaching of Jesus seems to him to be inconsistent.

This does not mean that modernism ignores or is contemptuous of the past. It recognises the reality and the value of history, and that only a knowledge of the past enables us to understand or to evaluate correctly the present. But modernism

looks forward rather than backward, and those who refuse to do this, appear to the modernist to be rebelling against God who demonstrably works by evolutionary methods. He does not think of life primarily as a riddle, but as a growing experience.

Hence, while the modernist values the Church, and is strongly opposed to the separatist or schismatic spirit, his ideal of Church unity is not that of ecclesiastical uniformity, whether of organization, worship or creed. For him, the real continuity is continuity of aim and spirit, not of opinion or detailed practice. Ecclesiastical uniformity can only be achieved at the cost of freedom. Only a common devotion, a common moral ideal, a common love and loyalty of churchmen to their Head and to one another, can ever secure the only unity which is worth having. So the modernist conception of authority in religion is different from that of what, historically, has been known as Catholicism. The only function of authority, from the modernist point of view, is to make itself unnecessary, and so to teach as to enable those taught to do without it. The authority which has as its object the retention of the mind in leading strings is wholly bad and is to be fought against wherever it is found. We all are bound to begin by accepting things on authority, but as soon as we come to be able to question the authority we have *begun* to be able to do without it. In any case authority is set up by man, and what man sets up he may, on sufficient cause, remove.

At the same time the modernist hates individualism, and, as I have said, schism. The discipline of love, so sorely needed, and all those qualities of patience, consideration for weaker or otherwise persuaded brethren, tolerance, sympathy and mutual service are best developed not by leaving a body with which we are not wholly in harmony, but by trying to live in it and for it. But modernism does demand that the body, for which it is worth while to do this, shall be comprehensive and many-sided. This is the true Catholic temper, and leads modernism to value historical continuity so highly. The old must be adapted, not pulled down, just as a wise man treats an ancient house. The modernist is not a revolutionary. His aim is to reconcile, and to include, not to exclude. At the same time modernism is anxious for simplification. Traditional Christian doctrines are many and too complicated, a frequent cause of misunderstanding and useless dispute. Modernism is insistent on the need for a distinction to be made between Religion and Theology, between faith and belief, and between fact and mode. *Religion* is the attempt of man to commune with the eternal. It is the feeling we have towards God, the inner experience we gain by our response to the stirrings within us of his spirit. *Theology* is the intellectual expression of that feeling and experience in the form of propositions. A man may be deeply religious while knowing little theology, or a theological expert without being religious. Religion is primary : Theo-

logy is secondary. Similarly *faith* is trust, and trust in the reality of the highest we know : *belief* is assent to propositions. A reduced Christianity is a Christianity weak in faith and good works, not necessarily a Christianity containing few articles in its creed. Jesus did not 'reduce' religion when he summed it up in the two great commandments than which, he said, there are no greater. Lastly, *fact* is the eternal reality of which the *mode* of expression may be mutable and temporary. The modernist does not mean by this distinction that of every historical fact there can be more than one true mode. He does mean that the consciousness of the reality of an eternal and spiritual world may clothe itself in many modes determined by the past history and psychological make-up of him whose consciousness it is.

Modernism in the English Church does not organize itself over-much. The only definitely modernist organization in England is called *The Churchmen's Union for the Advancement of Liberal Religious Thought*. It has increased in membership considerably, but does not include thousands who share or sympathize with its ideals. Its organ is *The Modern Churchman*, and it holds an annual conference for the discussion of important questions of theology and of the relation of modernism to other movements in the English Church. Its aims are the following :—

1. To affirm the continuous and progressive character of the revelation given by the Holy Spirit in the spheres of knowledge and of conduct.
2. To maintain the right and the duty of the Church of England to restate her doctrines from time to time in accordance with this revelation.
3. To uphold the historic comprehensiveness of the Church of England.
4. To defend the freedom of responsible students, clerical as well as lay, in their work of criticism and research.
5. To promote the adaptation of the Church services to the needs and knowledge of the time.
6. To assert the claim of the laity to a larger share in the Government and responsible work of the Church.
7. To foster co-operation and fellowship between the Church of England and other Christian Churches.
8. To study the application of Christian principles and ideals to the whole of our social life.

It thus becomes clear that modernism, in as far as it is true to its principles, involves a different attitude towards other religions than that which has

so generally characterized Christianity in the past. Christian teachers have often assumed that there is a definite body of theological statements for which we have Divine guarantees and sanctions of its truth. It is the claim of modernism that there is no such body of theological statement, and this is the root quarrel of modernism with dogmatism. This does not mean that the modernist would for a moment agree that it does not matter what a man believes, or that all religions are the same. Rather it is because the modernist is convinced that belief *does* matter that he protests against the dogmatic assertion of propositions for which there seems little evidence and which cannot be verified. Even speculative truth, however, has its value, and the modernist would not wish to fight an out-of-date intellectualism by attempting to stultify or to depreciate the function of the intellect in religion. On the other hand, the study of Comparative Religion has convinced the modernist that the Religion is a natural activity of the human spirit, and that in fact we are seldom, if ever, faced with a choice between the wholly true and the wholly false. He has faith that Christianity as he understands it will be found acceptable increasingly as education and enlightenment proceeds, though he does not for a moment expect or even hope that the formal expression of that Christianity will be identical or even at all like that which he believes to be best within the Church of England. He does

not expect that any one formal theology will ever displace all others, and when he thinks of religions he classifies them not as true and false, but as higher and lower, not forgetting how much his classification may depend on the limitations of his own knowledge and experience of other religions. In any case, he regards Christianity as the crown, not the contradiction of them. For the modernist, where the spirit of Christ is, there is not only liberty, but also the Catholic Church.

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## **The Theism of Rāmānuja : Some Problems.**

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PHILOSOPHY has its roots in man's practical needs. If a system of thought cannot justify fundamental human instincts and interpret the deeper spirit of religion, it cannot meet with general acceptance. The speculations of philosophers, which do not comfort us in our stress and suffering, are mere intellectual diversion and not serious thinking. The absolute of Śamkara, rigid, motionless, and totally lacking in initiative or influence, cannot call forth our worship. Like the Taj Mahal, which is unconscious of the admiration it arouses, the Absolute remains indifferent to the fear and love of its worshippers, and for all those who regard the goal of religion as the goal of philosophy—to know God is to know the real—Śamkara's view seems to be a finished example of learned error. They feel that it is as unsatisfactory to natural instincts as to trained intelligence. The world is said to be an appearance and God a bloodless Absolute dark with the excess of light. The obvious fact of experience that, when weak and erring human beings call from the depths, the helping hand of grace is

stretched out from the unknown, is ignored. Śamkara does not deal justly with the living sense of companionship which the devotees have in their difficult lives. He declares that to save oneself is to lose oneself in the sea of the unknown. Personal values are subordinated to impersonal ones, but the theist protests that truth, beauty and goodness have no reality as self-existent abstractions. An experience that is not owned by a subject is a contradiction in terms. Truth, beauty and perfection speak to us of a primal mind in whose experience they are eternally realised. God himself is the highest reality as well as supreme value. Moreover, the innermost being of God is not solely the realisation of eternal truth or the enjoyment of perfect beauty, but is perfect love which expends itself for others. The value of the finite world to the Spirit of the universe lies in the spirits to whom he has given the capacity to make themselves in his own image. The spirits themselves possess a value in the sight of God, and not merely their degrees of intelligence or virtue, abstractly considered, which they happen to realise. It follows that they are not made simply to be broken up and cast aside.

Rāmānuja concentrates his attention on the relation of the world to God, and argues that God is indeed real and independent ; but the souls of the world are real also, though their reality is utterly dependent on that of God. He believes in a spiritual principle at the basis of the world, which

is not treated as an illusion. He insists on the continued individual existence of the released souls. Though the world of matter and individual souls have a real existence of their own, still neither of them is essentially the same as Brahman. For, while Brahman is eternally free from all imperfection, matter is unconscious, and the individual souls are subject to ignorance and suffering. Yet they all form a unity, since matter and souls have existence only as the body of Brahman, *i.e.* they can exist and be what they are simply because Brahman is their soul and controlling power.\* Apart from Brahman, they are nothing. The individual soul and inanimate nature are essentially different from him, though they have no existence or purpose to serve apart from him or his service. So Rāmānuja's theory is an advaita, or non-dualism, though with a qualification (*viśeṣa*), *viz.* that it admits plurality, since the supreme spirit subsists in a plurality of forms as souls and matter. It is therefore called *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, or qualified non-dualism.

In ethics also there was a protest against the intellectualism favoured by the followers of Śaṅkara and the ritualism of the Mīmāṃsakas. Even as

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\* " Everything in this world, whether individual souls or material things, form the body of the supreme soul, and therefore the above can be said to possess a body unconditionally (*nirupādhikasarīra-ātma*). For this very reason competent persons call the body of teachings (*śāstra*), having Brahman for its subject-matter, *śārīra*."

early as the age of the Rig-Veda we found that gods were sometimes entreated by prayer and at others compelled by ritual. The sacrificial cult had always to contend with the devotional worship of the supreme through symbols, originally in groves and later in temples. In the sacrificial religion of the Vedas, the priest who officiates is more important than the deity. But the dative case offers no solace to the aching heart. Kumārila, moreover, the Brahmin architect who tried to build a stable society out of the chaotic conditions left by the disintegration of Buddhism, sought to strengthen the Brahmanical cult by laying the foundations of caste solid and strong in a system wherein only the three upper classes were allowed to perform sacrifices, while the people at large were left to their own devotional cults. Hence the reaction against the Mīmāṃsakas led to the development of the theistic religion of Vaishnavism, Śaivism and Śākāism, which laid little stress on considerations of caste, race or social status. Theism has implicit in it the social hope. As children of the common father or mother, we are all on the same footing. All men, high or low, are equally precious to the parental heart.

Though Śaṃkara did not mean by jñāna theoretical learning, there was a tendency among some of his disciples to make religion more an affair of the heart or will.\* They shut out from eternal life

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\* Cp. Vākyaṛthajñānamātrād amṛtam iti (*Tattvamuktākalāpa*, ii. 45).

the soul that is wrong, as well as the soul that is wicked. The mechanical repetition of the formula "I am Brahman" is a sorry substitute for intelligent devotion. Hence the emphasis on bhakti by the theistic systems, including the four Vaishnava schools.\* Despite doctrinal differences, these are all agreed in rejecting the conception of māyā, in regarding God as personal, and the soul as possessed of inalienable individuality, finding its true being in an absorption in the Supreme but in fellowship with him.

While the philosophy of Śaṅkara may have some attraction for those superior minds which shy at sentimental solutions of difficulties and seek their internal satisfaction in the discipline of the will which will enable them to bear with a Stoic calm the worst that circumstances will inflict on them, even Śaṅkara allows that the millions of humanity crave for a God who has some heart about him. Rāmānuja's view is the highest *expression* of the truth, though Śaṅkara would add that the real is something larger and better than our thinking has room for. We need not assume, Rāmānuja contends, that what comes through religion is not the highest reality.† Theism of the type advocated by

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\* Srisampradāya of Rāmānuja, Brahmasampradāya of Madhva, Rudrasampradāya of Viṣṇusvāmin, and Sanakādisampradāya of Nimbārka.

† Cp. Bradley: "The man who demands a reality more solid than that of religious consciousness knows not what he seeks."

Rāmānuja is what even Śaṅkara allows in life and religion. It is the faith of Hinduism, whether in its Vaishnava, Smārta, Śaiva or Śākta form. It is strange that Western thinkers and critics should overlook this striking fact and persist in foisting on Hinduism as a whole the theory of abstract monism.\* While Rāmānuja's statement is not in any way inferior to other forms of theism, it is not free from the difficulties incident to the theistic outlook.

By the theory of the relation of viśeshya and viśeṣhaṇa, or substance and attribute, Rāmānuja attempts to bring out the reality of one and one existence only† and assimilate the others to it. Taking up the relation of Brahman to the qualities of sat, chit and ānanda, Rāmānuja argues that the unity of these attributes is not an absolute unity but one of inherence, *i.e.* relation, wherein distinction subsists between the substance and the attributes as well as between the attributes themselves. God is the underlying substratum in which infinite attributes inhere. Rāmānuja cannot escape from this conclusion so long as he accepts logical judgment

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\* Hegel writes : " In the Eastern religions the first condition is that only the one substance shall, as such, be the true, and that the individual neither can have within himself, nor can he attain to any true value in as far as he maintains himself as against the being in and for itself. He can have true value only through an identification with its substance in which he ceases to exist as subject and disappears into unconsciousness."

† *Nyāyasiddhānta*, p. 96.

as providing the clue to the nature of ultimate reality. All judgment is a synthesis of subject and predicate or substance and attribute. But all affirmations deal with finite objects, whose unity does not exceed the relation of inherence; in finite experience we do not find the absolute unity. We are impelled to transcend the world of change and finitude in order to reach reality where the subject and the predicate are absolute. The assumption of such a reality is the basis of all logical procedure. In judgment we try our best to bring out the full nature of reality by a series of predications. But a string of abstractions cannot do justice to the wealth of reality unless we assume that the ultimate reality is thought as such. It is this absolute judgment that is implicit in our mind from the first, that being and thought are one.

Beyond the fact that the absolute characterised by sat, chit and ānanda is a concrete one possessing these distinctive attributes, Rāmānuja does not tell us how exactly these attributes are found organically related in the absolute itself.

Between substance and attributes,\* Brahman and the world, the relation is one of non-difference

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\* The conception of the relation of substance and attributes is an unsatisfactory one. If the two are identical, the distinction is meaningless; if the two are different, then the relation becomes a purely external one. If the two are related internally by samavāyā, this relation itself must be related to the terms, and so on *ad infinitum*.

and not co-inherence. For the latter denotes an inherent separateness.

Are the souls and the world also one with Brahman ? If so, in what sense ? The dependence of the viśeshanas, or attributes, is eternal and is connected with his essential nature.\* The world is not merely a viśeshana, but has to do with the nature of the supreme as well. It is the manifestation of the inner determination of the real. The admission of individual souls as co-eternal with Brahman constitutes a limit. The infinitude of Brahman is compromised by the unconditioned infinitude of its constituent factors. If Brahman and the soul exist co-eternally, what is the relation between them ? An eternal relation between them, whether essential or accidental, will be an inexplicable mystery. The self of Brahman is distinct from its body, and we can call it the unconditioned self.

The finite centres of experience seem to be resolved, in Rāmānuja's scheme, into movements in the life of God. If the absolute is a perfect personality including all selves and the world, it is difficult to know how the finite selves, with their respective consciousnesses, unique meanings and values, are sustained. One self cannot be a part of another. Rāmānuja's Brahman is not only a supreme self, but an eternal society of eternal selves. How can

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\* Svarūpānubandhitvena niyatatvāt (ii. 4. 14).



God both include and exclude the individual in the same ultimate sense? We may distinguish between God as distinct from the lesser spirits who derive their being from him and the absolute which comprehends all conceivable existence. God, spirits and matter are the Absolute, and not God alone. Yet Rāmānuja identifies God with the Absolute, beside which and beyond which nothing exists. When he emphasises the monistic character of his system, he makes out that the supreme reality has the unity of self-consciousness, and matter and souls are but moments in the being of that supreme spirit. When he is anxious to preserve the independence of the individual, he argues that the individual souls are all centres of consciousness, knowing subjects possessing self-consciousness, though their selfhood is derived from God.

Brahman is the material and the efficient cause of the universe of souls and matter. The changes relate to the body of God, while the soul (dehi) remains unchanged (nirvikāra).\* "Everything different from that highest self, whether conscious or non-conscious, constitutes its body, while the self alone is the unconditioned embodied self."† The body of God is the material cause and the soul is the efficient cause, and so we can say that God is

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\* *Tattvamuktākalāpa*, iii. 25.

† Svavyatiriktam chetanâchetanavastujātam svasharīram āti, sa eva nirupādhikasharīra ātmā (i. 1. 13).

both the material and the efficient cause of the world. This distinction is to be maintained, for Rāmānuja believes that the changes of the body do not affect the soul of God, even as the changes of the jīva's body do not affect the essence of jīva. What, then, is the essence of God which remains unchanged? Whether in a subtle condition, as in pralaya, or a gross condition, as in creation, or an individualised though not imperfect condition, as in the state of release, the essence of Íśvara differs from that of the world. It has also to be distinguished from the nityavibhūti of Íśvara. It is difficult to conceive the nature of the absolute if we set aside the attributes of sat, chit and ānanda, which, after all, are only attributes. Yet if the attributes form the essential nature of God, then the process of change in them must also affect his nature. Does all this mean that God is not absolute actuality, but is himself in the making? The distinction, finally, that the soul of God is the efficient cause and his body the material cause is untenable. We cannot take half a fowl for cooking and leave the other to lay eggs.

The crux of all monism is the relation of the finite to the infinite. A system of finite reals cannot itself be infinite. We must have something over and above the finite. Rāmānuja comprehends all aspects of the world under the two categories of thought and matter, and finds that the two are well adapted to each other, and so concludes that there

is a God who directs the world process. Logic suggests it, religious consciousness confirms it, and so most of us accept it. But it is not a solution of the problem. It is open to say that all explanation is within the reality and not of it. We can never say why the real is what it is. But even within the real the relations are not logically determined. If the finite is equated with thought and matter, such opposed factors cannot belong to the same reality. Either the unity of the whole or the distinction of the attributes requires to be modified. What Rāmānuja does is to combine the two into one absolute, which is a concrete organic whole, all of whose parts and elements exist in and through a supreme principle which embodies itself in them. The criticism directed against Śaṅkara is that he elevates the absolute to such a height that there is no path which leads down to the lowlands of humanity. Rāmānuja intends to give us a more satisfying unity which is neither an identity nor an aggregate of parts, but comprehends all differences and relations. One may well ask whether such an absolute experience is not an arbitrary fancy incapable of verification. We can combine words so as to make a plausible statement, but it is doubtful whether there is a corresponding reality. If the absolute is supposed to be a transcendent changeless existence, it is a problem how such an absolute, which has no history, includes the time process and the evolution of the world. Unless Rāmānuja is

willing to explain away the immutable perfection of the absolute, and substitute for it a perpetually changing process, a sort of progressing perfection, he cannot give us any satisfactory explanation of the relation of the soul of the absolute to its body.

How, again, are the mechanism of nature and the sphere of souls combined in the unity? It is all very well to attempt to preserve the unity of the world as well as the distinctness of individuals. But if our sorrows and struggles, sins and imperfections are integral parts of the absolute, and are eternally present to the divine mind as distinct constituents of his unruffled beatific consciousness, are not the souls simply certain permanent elements in God's mind? On the other hand, if we are separate individuals, God must be separate from us. The mere fact that we share in a common life does not lessen our individuality.\* Rāmānuja uses the analogy of soul and body to indicate that the body cannot exist apart from the soul embodied in it. When the soul departs, the body perishes. Again, body exists only to give pleasure and pain to the soul. The final cause of the body is the soul. But if the analogy is pressed, it will mean that God is all, and the souls and body are merely instrumental to the pleasure of God.

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\* "If we assume," says Bradley, "that individual men, yourself and myself, are real, each in his own right, to speak of God as having reality in the religious consciousness is nonsense." (*Truth and Reality*, pp. 434-5).

The concrete universal of certain Hegelian thinkers is a word which does not solve the problem but restates it. The problem of philosophy is for them the relating in one whole of the eternal perfection of the absolute and the endless process of the world.

Rāmānuja is anxious to conserve the permanent and independent reality of the individual souls and vigorously protests against the view which reduces individuality to a delusive appearance. Within the one reality, which we may call the absolute, a distinction is made between God, the individual souls and unconscious matter.\* The supreme is the soul of the individual jīva, since all things form the body of God.† What Rāmānuja takes for the soul is the empirical ego, which is something finite and has a before and an after. It is not much to the point to urge that all knowledge involves the distinction of subject and object. For this distinction is a relative one. In the case of vision, we distinguish the scene of sight as the object of vision and the eye as the subject. So also in conscious experiencing we distinguish the content of consciousness from its form and call the latter subject and the former object, though, strictly speaking, both these belong to the world of experience. What Rāmānuja calls the subject is not the subject truly conceived as subject, but is a subject which is itself objectified

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\* Cp. with this Rashdall's view (*Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. ii, pp. 238 ff.)

† Sarvātmatvāt pratyagātmanopyātmā paramātmā.

and reduced to one of the many finite objects contained in experience.\*

Rāmānuja says that the individual soul is not affected by the changes of its body. It is naturally pure. The dark shadows of materiality do but hide its glory, but not destroy it. Materialisation is but an accident which can be shaken off. This materialisation is the product of sin, but the pure soul cannot sin. So sin cannot be without the embodied soul, and there can be no embodied soul without sin. Rāmānuja, like other Hindu thinkers, gets over the difficulty by the conception of a beginningless samsāra. But this involves the pure spirituality of the soul. Sin and punishment both belong to the objective series and have nothing to do with the pure subject, which cannot sin; but if the soul can sin, then it means that it is already connected with matter, and it is not the pure soul but the empirical ego.† When it is said that the object series is beginningless, we get the pure spirit on the one side and the object on the other, both being absolute existents, since they find no explanation outside

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\* Cp. Gentile: "If then we would know the essence of the mind's transcendental activity, we must not present it as spectator and spectacle, the mind as an object of experience, the subject an outside on-looker. In so far as consciousness is an object of consciousness it is no longer consciousness. Strictly speaking, it is no longer a subject but an object, no longer an ego but a non-ego." (*Theory of Mind as Pure Act*, E.T., p. 6).

† Svasariragatabālatvayuvavatvasthanaviratvādayo dharmāḥ jīvam na sprisanti (i. 1. 13).

themselves. The soul is pure in itself; the body hangs on to it. How does this happen?

What is the relation of the self to knowledge? Are they different or are they one? If they are different, then experience of pleasure or pain at a certain point in the body will belong to knowledge and not to self, and so the self will not be able to feel pleasure or pain. We cannot say that knowledge is a function (vyāpāra) of the self, for then it must be caused. But, in Rāmānuja, knowledge is eternal and independent, and not a product. If the self and knowledge are one, then even the self will be liable to expansion and contraction. But the atomic soul cannot expand and contract. The relation between the self, which is itself made up of consciousness\*, and knowledge, is not clearly conceived. The self is filled with consciousness, and has also for its quality consciousness.† “Knowledge is distinct from the knowing subject whose quality it is, as smell which is perceived as a quality of earth is distinct from earth.”‡ But Rāmānuja admits that in deep sleep there is consciousness, though it does not relate itself to objects.§ The nature of self is not so much knowledge as pure consciousness, which, now and then, relates itself to objects.

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\* Vijnānamayo hi jīvo na buddhimātram (i. 1. 13).

† ii. 3. 29.

‡ ii. 3. 27

§ Jñānasya vishayagocharatvam jāgryādāvupalabhyate (ii. 3. 31).

The relation of the jīva to Brahman is not free from difficulties. Rāmānuja says: "The highest Brahman resolved to be many. It thereupon sent forth the entire world, consisting of fire, water, etc., introduced in this world, so sent forth, the whole mass of individual souls (chetanam jīvavargam) into different bodies, divine, human, etc., corresponding to the desert of each soul, and finally itself entering according to its wish into these souls, so as to constitute their inner self (jīvāntarātmā), evolved in all these aggregates names and forms, *i.e.* rendered each aggregate something substantial (vastu) and capable of being denoted by a word."\* The jīva is thus a reflex of the whole reality. Each jīva has (1) the antaryāmin Brahman, the light which lighteth every existence; (2) the soul, which is the knowing subject; and (3) the unconscious instruments through which the soul works. Each individual seems to be a trinity in unity, even as the supreme Brahman is.† Brahman is the prototype, of which the individual is the ectype; for each individual possesses in finite and material outlines the supreme perfection of God. Again, when the soul casts off the body and enters on the state of release, it seems to become a bare point of mere existence. It is not cut off from God, since the currents of divine life flow through it. Will there not be an overlapping of these souls? If not, what is it that distinguishes

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\* i. 1-13.

† Achijjīvavisishtaparamātmā (i. 1-13).



these souls from one another? Are they substances in their own right, or mere qualities housed in the absolute? Rāmānuja believes that each of these souls has a centrality and has experiences which it organises into a unity, but the logic of it all seems to be rather weak.

Rāmānuja's conception of the individual self reminds us of the scholastic theory of substance which Kant, in his *Refutation of Rational Psychology*, and Śamkara, in his commentary on the *Brahma Sūtra*, have exploded. Rāmānuja believes in a continuous self-identical entity which is eternal, while Śamkara maintains that the quality of continuous self-identity is true only of the ātman. On Rāmānuja's view, it is difficult to know the relation between the continuous development and the identical essence of the self. As in Hegel, we have here an identity of process, an identity which is said to persist in and through difference. If the identity of individual self is not affected by the passage from body to body, or by the periodic suspension of consciousness, it follows that the bodily relation, memory and consciousness are not fundamental to the nature of the self. We cannot understand what the permanent unchanging nature of the self is to which all the known experiences are irrelevant. We seem to be reduced to an abstract monadism where terms like personal identity, continuity of consciousness, immortality and pre-existence are meaningless. The abstract monad

has little to do with the concrete living self of experience. It is an assumption to hold that the simple colourless unit called the self is different in each individual. We are obliged to admit that there is a fundamental ātman in each individual which is somehow related to a fluid historical development.

Śamkara and Rāmānuja are the two great thinkers of the Vedānta, and the best qualities of each were the defects of the other. Śamkara's apparently arid logic made his system unattractive religiously ; Rāmānuja's beautiful stories of the other world, which he narrates with the confidence of one who had personally assisted at the origination of the world, carry no conviction. Śamkara's devasating dialectic, which traces all—God, man and the world—to one ultimate consciousness, produces not a little curling of the lips in the followers of Rāmānuja. Samkara's followers outdo the master, and bring his doctrine perilously near atheistic mentalism. The followers of Rāmānuja move with as much Olympian assurance through the chambers of the Divine mind as Milton through the halls of heaven. Yet Rāmānuja had the greatness of a religious genius. Ideas flowed in on him from various sources—the Upanishads and the Āgamas, the Purāṇas and the Prabhandham—and he responded to them all with some side of his religious nature. All their different elements are held together in the indefin-

able unity of religious experience. The philosophic spirit was strong in Rāmānuja, so, too, was his religious need. He tries his best to reconcile the demands of the religious feeling with the claims of logical thinking. If he did not succeed in the attempt to give us systematic and self-contained philosophy of religion, it should not surprise us. Much more remarkable is the deep earnestness and hard logic with which he conceived the problem and laboured to bridge the yawning gulf between the apparently conflicting claims of religion and philosophy. A thin intellect with no depth of soul may be blind to the wonders of God's ways, and may have offered us a seemingly simple solution. Not so Rāmānuja, who gives us the best type of monotheism conceivable, inset with touches of immanentism.

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## **The Faith of the Brahma Samaj.**

[The Rev. G. Y. Chitnis, D. Phil., Member of the Royal Asiatic Society and the Royal Society of Literature, London.]

The name Brahma Samaj suggests a society of those who worship Brahma. The term Brahma is very loosely used in the religious literature of the Hindus. In a philosophical sense it signifies that eternal and absolute Reality which is the ground and the cause of the universe. The sages of the Upanishads mean by this term that which by its very nature is unknowable. This means that it is beyond all the attributes which are generally ascribed to God by the human mind. It is attributeless and could not be comprehended through the ordinary channels of knowledge. In the philosophy of Shankaracharya we find the distinction made between Brahma with attributes and Brahma without attributes. He speaks of the former as Nirguna Brahma, and the latter as Saguna Brahma. But Shankar does not grant absolute reality to Saguna Brahma. Only Nirguna Brahma is absolutely real. One of the modern philosophers, Mr. F. H. Bradley follows practically the same line of argument when he says that God is not real in the absolute sense. Sometimes the term is

used in quite a different sense as for instance, in the oft-quoted expression, *Aham Brahma Asmi*. (I am Brahma).

The Brahma Samaj, however, means by this term something entirely different. The Brahma according to its conception is *Saguna*, that is with the attributes of love, mercy and so on, and at the same time it is absolutely real. In fact the Brahma Samaj cannot conceive of eternal and ultimate Reality except in terms of this *Saguna Brahma*, this personal God with whom it is possible for every human being to come in contact of love and reverence, of affection and gratitude. The God that the Brahma Samaj worships is a loving God and a living God and therefore it asserts the inalienable right of every man, however humble and mean his station in life may be, to live in communion with him, because he is the father of his spirit. This truth is not new in the sense that there were no theistic societies before the days of the Brahma Samaj, which worshipped God in spirit, but their worship and devotion were very often associated with unmeaning ritual and ceremony. The Brahma Samaj while asserting the possibility of worshipping God in spirit and in truth courageously sets its back against any lapse into idolatry or ceremonialism. The last hundred years that this movement has lived have been used not only for the purpose of formulating a correct doctrine and a liberal creed which will satisfy the questionings of

the intellect and the ever advancing knowledge coming from a deeper study of the physical universe; but they have been years which are above all rich in producing a vast religious and devotional literature which breathing as it does deep spirituality combined with a lofty and purely ethical conception of the Deity, has provided inspiration not only for the members of the Brahma Samaj but also for that increasing number of silent sympathisers who are becoming more and more convinced of its central doctrine *viz.* that God is spirit and that it is possible for every man to come in intimate contact with him without the aid of images, mediators or priests. This doctrine the Brahma Samaj has preached from the very beginning and it will go on preaching it till the whole world eschews idolatry in all its forms and implications, and dedicates itself to the one God who is without a Second.

The Brahma Samaj does not countenance the idea that man is originally sinful. The doctrine of original sin as conceived by the Semetic religions does not find the slightest support in the theology of this movement. It asserts on the contrary that man is essentially divine and therefore good. If he were merely human he would not understand anything of the divine; but he not only understands, but is able to live in communion with, the divine. The normal condition of man's life is to live in peace and amity with his fellowmen, but being

blinded by pride and self-love, he daringly conceives the most powerful weapons of destruction so that he might monopolise the good things of the world by putting out of the world those who are likely to thwart his will. The spirit of competition which is supposed to provide incentive for commercial and industrial enterprise is nothing but an expression of this self-love and pride and therefore we may safely assert that these are the vices upon which our present economic and political systems are based. Now when the Brahma Samaj proclaims that it is the birth right of every man to come in direct contact with his Maker, and that birth right can never be bartered away for a mess of pottage, it means that no society can live for a long time unless it is based upon the recognition of the divine which exists in the heart of each one of its members. The current economic and political theories which start from the assumption that originally man is neither good nor evil and it is his environment which makes him either good or evil are entirely wrong and misleading. If this view were true, then the emergence of great men who are generally the makers of the world's history, from the humblest and apparently most discouraging environment would be inexplicable; but it is a fact that periodically there arise great men and prophets, saints and saviours who cannot be explained in terms of their environment and who are generally the heralds of some new light on old

problems or an altogether fresh revelation of the will and purpose of God. Of course our economists would fain do away with the God-idea as the product of the feverish imagination of an enfeebled humanity; but then their attempts at reform and regeneration of mankind are unintelligible, because such attempts tacitly imply that man is capable of becoming better and nobler than he is by remaking his environment. So by a round about way our political and economic philosophers come back to the position of the Brahma Samaj, that man being essentially divine possesses an infinite capacity for bettering himself.

This doctrine of the essential likeness of man and God, the Brahma Samaj has inherited from the sages of the Upanishads. If there is one thing which stands out as the most characteristic feature of Hindu Philosophy in all its ramifications, it is the essential identity of the human and the divine. Some of the writers of the Upanishads and Shankar have carried this doctrine so far as to make man absolutely one with God. Their philosophies, therefore, cannot strictly be called religious in the sense that they do not leave any room for the divine over and above the human. The philosophy of Ramanuja does allow an eternal difference to exist between the human and the divine, the finite and the infinite, although he insists along with his predecessors that man is divine; but the difference according to Ramanuja is a difference of know-



ledge, power and wisdom and therefore it is not an ethical difference but a metaphysical one. The Brahma Samaj on the other hand maintains an eternal difference between the perfect will of God and the imperfect will of man, a difference between the perfect character of God and man's unceasing efforts to attain that perfection which ever remains unrealised.

The so-called conflict between science and religion wears a curious aspect for the Brahma Samaj. Science has ranged freely throughout the universe and has claimed the right to challenge every belief in the name of fact and asserts that it will submit itself to proof. This claim of science does not happen to be quite just ; because science is also only an imperfect representation of the universe as it is revealed to the senses, and as some of the recent philosophers have told us, Reality is something which is beyond the domain of science. Bergson maintains that Reality being essentially fluent and creative could not be adequately dealt with by the conceptions of science which are intended to deal with that which is fixed, rigid and static. This being the case, we shall have to modify the exaggerated claim of science to challenge every faith on the simple ground that science is supposed to give a truer interpretation of the universe than anything else. On the contrary Reality as it presents itself to an eye of simple, trusting faith is much more real and enduring

than the one which science deals with. Whatever, therefore, the advance of science in its own particular field, we may safely and fearlessly welcome it because it cannot touch the sphere of religion ; it does not mean that science has absolutely nothing to say in matters religious. There are things religious which are contrary to human reason and therefore to science, these must be given up as superstitions ; but there are things which are not, and cannot be, tested in a laboratory because they are above human reason. These we must cherish because although not proved by science, they at the same time form an integral part of human experience. So long as science cannot interpret human experience as a whole, we shall have to fall back upon something which though not strictly scientific is nonetheless true.

Then again, science deals with fact and not value, with quantity and not quality. Religion deals with value and quality and therefore although the latter has not the same exactitude and certainty as the former, it would be wrong to dismiss it altogether as untrue simply because it does not conform to the standard of science. Hence there is some truth in the words of Lord Balfour that there is in fact no conflict between science and religion because dealing as they do with spheres which lie ever apart, they are not likely to meet. It is the business of science to deal with the visible and religion to deal with the invisible ; science deals with the material,

religion with the spiritual; science with the temporal, religion with the eternal. Dean Inge of St. Paul's controverts this position by maintaining that we cannot rest satisfied with this dualism and knowledge must pass into faith and faith into love which combines both knowledge and faith. This is all very well if the Dean could tell us how the transition from knowledge into faith and from faith into love is to be achieved. How science in other words can ever become religion. The harmony between knowledge and faith could be realised only by subordinating the one to the other. If faith gives a deeper insight into the nature of ultimate Reality than knowledge, then the latter must occupy a subordinate position ; if the knowledge, on the other hand, is a better interpreter of Reality, then faith must give precedence to knowledge. Harmony does not mean respecting the claims of each equally, but it means the subordinating the claims of the one to those of the other. The Brahma Samaj does not decry knowledge, but it gives a higher place to faith.

It adopts the same attitude towards the study of history when the latter is pursued by the same method of ordered inquiry as science. Believing as it does, that no historical person, however great, is infallible, it can boldly and fearlessly accept the results of what is known as historical criticism. Not to speak of the Vedas and the Upanishads which are obviously written by persons who are practically unknown to us, this movement can listen

to a critical appreciation of persons like Gautama Buddha and Jesus Christ without the slightest embarrassment. Being based upon the testimony of the present living God in the immediate experience of each individual, it is prepared to cut itself off from the past if historical criticism proves it to be necessary. In this respect it stands out in sharp contrast to all other liberal movements which have sprung up in modern times. It does not mean that the Brahma Samaj wants to deny the past. On the contrary, it sits at the feet of every prophet and saint that God in his unbounded mercy has sent for the salvation of humanity. Only it does not make its faith dependent upon any one of them or all of them put together. This faith in the ever-living God remains central in the life of each Brahmo and it cannot be shattered even if historical criticism were to prove that all the prophets and saints of the world are myths pure and simple. By way of illustrating this point it is enough to mention Prof. Arthur Drews' book called "Christ-Myth". Another illustration is provided by Dr. Albert Schweitzer's book which created a great stir when it first appeared in Germany. In that book the learned doctor propounds the theory that Jesus throughout his ministry was dominated by eschatological ideas and he died on the cross the death of a disillusioned fanatic. It is not necessary to enter into a detailed discussion of Dr. Schweitzer's theory. The present writer feels that Schweitzer

is entirely wrong ; but he is mentioning it here only to indicate the position of the Brhama Samaj. Supposing that Dr. Schweitzer is right—and there are many scholars who feel that he is right—does it not entirely shatter the foundation of many a Christian creed based upon an estimate of the life and teaching of Jesus which is opposed to Dr. Schweitzer's theory ? It also shatters the foundation of those beliefs which accept his ethical teaching as an ideal beyond which it is not possible for human mind to travel. This is the great danger into which all historical religion's fall. They seek to avoid this danger either by adapting their creeds to the needs of the time spirit or by making historical criticism subservient to their particular theological bias. In both cases there is violence done either to religion or to historical criticism. The religious attitude of the Brahma Samaj is such that it can help it to steer clear of this danger. Whatever the verdict of historical criticism it can calmly accept it without prejudice to its religious aspirations.

The Brahma Samaj does not adopt a negative attitude towards life. Throughout the history of Hinduism, in spite of the fact that attempts have been made from time to time to bring back both the philosophy and the religion of the Hindus to a positive view of life, the fundamental conception of life which is primarily pessimistic and negative remains the same. The ancient Hindu philosophers as they faced the problem of human life were

impressed with the appalling suffering which man is heir to. They, therefore, held that freedom from suffering which is an evil is possible only when man is able to develop that supra-mental state wherein he neither feels pleasure nor pain, neither joy nor sorrow. Apart from the possibility of developing such a state of the mind, it is clear that the whole meaning and value of life is lost when it brings itself to this state. The Brahma Samaj maintains that in so far as love is the highest fulfilment of man's life he cannot escape suffering. Love in the highest sense involves suffering and since Hindu philosophy contends that suffering is an evil, it means that man must refuse to love in order to escape suffering. The wellknown line of Tennyson which says that it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all, is according to the strict Hindu conception, wrong; and since loving involves the possibility of the loved one being lost and the lover subjected to untold miseries, it would maintain that it would be wrong to love in that way. The whole philosophy of Vedant is based upon this and other Hindu systems do not differ from it in this respect. What the Hindu philosophy achieves in this way is pure negation or emptiness. We reverence the ancient philosophers for their wisdom and spiritual insight; but it cannot blind us to the fact that what they have achieved is not the fulness of life but its opposite. From the time this view of life began to influence the mind and thought

of the Hindus, the Hindu society became static and fossilised. It degenerated into castes based upon birth and ceased to develop dynamically. It has often been argued that the Hindu society has not been influenced in the slightest degree by foreign manners and customs, religion or philosophy. In the first place it is not true that the Hindu society has remained unchanged although it has not changed as rapidly as other societies: but this unwillingness to change is not due to its innate strength and vitality, but on the contrary it has become too inert and rigid to spontaneously adapt itself to the changed conditions. The stationary character of this society is owing to spiritual lethargy and therefore the writer has no patience with those who maintain that spiritually India is supreme although politically and economically it is a subject nation. Political and economic slavery suggests an utter lack of spiritual power which whenever present is sure to express itself in all the forms of man's activities. This spiritual lethargy is solely due to the other worldly attitude of the Hindu religion and philosophy and unless it is changed radically and is replaced by a positive and virile view of life, there is not the slightest possibility of our country's regeneration in any form. In his work on "Ethics and Civilisation" Dr. Schweitzer remarks that what is wrong with the present modern civilisation is that it has no theory of life; what is wrong with Hindu civilisation is that it has

a wrong theory of life and unless it is replaced by a right one it will not move forward and it is absolutely essential that it should move forward. The view of life as preached by the Brahma Samaj is one that must be accepted by all who are interested in preserving the best that is in Hindu civilisation. The Brahma Samaj does not look upon suffering as an evil in itself nor is it afraid of the still sad music of humanity which vibrates throughout the universe. This movement holds that sorrows individual and collective are intended to deepen and enlarge the spiritual life of humanity ; it is a discipline which none of us may rebel against without doing violence to our moral and spiritual nature. Either we must, like the Stoics, look upon the sorrows of the world with a calm indifference which nothing will ruffle or we must be so callous as to be absolutely impervious to the heart-rending scenes of which the world is full. The Brahma Samaj does not pretend to solve the problem of evil ; there are some evils which are hardly reconcilable to our conception of the omnipotence and the goodness of God ; but it is prepared to believe and trust where it cannot understand. Knowing well that the great and good God who reveals his love so unmistakably in the heart of each individual, who is so merciful that but for his mercy we would cease to exist, and who is moreover so watchful that he ever guides our erring steps along the path of right, the Brahma



Samaj is willing to trust the inscrutable providence of God in cases where his mercy and goodness seem to fail. Here again this movement prefers faith to knowledge because knowledge however perfect, cannot solve for us problems which involve the mystery of free will, the goodness of God and the ultimate destiny of human life. These are the things which although not capable of intellectual demonstration may nevertheless be understood by a trusting and loving heart, a heart which has deeply felt the poignancy of sorrow because it has deeply loved. For this reason the Brahma Samaj welcomes the fulness of life that comes through sorrow and suffering rather than mere negation or emptiness which nothing can fill.

From what has been written above, it will be seen that the Brahma Samaj represents the most liberal development of the religious thought in modern times. It also represents a good many of the elements that will go to constitute the universal church of humanity. It is indeed idle to pretend that the Brahma Samaj as it exists today will be the church of the future. There are at present elements in both the faith and the practice of the Brahma Samaj which are purely of a local and contingent character. What we can reasonably expect is that if there is going to be such a thing as a universal church for the whole of humanity, the Brahma Samaj will have a very large share in the formation both of its form and content. For it is not merely one of

the many attempts that have been made from time to time from within a particular historical religion to bring that religion in line with the best thought of the age ; but it is a genuine independent religious growth of the modern mind, and as such it can reasonably claim to provide a basis for any future church that will seek to embody the agelong effort of man to reach his God directly and immediately, a church that will appeal from the religion as an authority to the religion as an experience, a church, moreover, that will make every man feel that the earth he inherits is not a mere temporary abode where a journeying pilgrim sojourns for a while and then returns to his promised land, but a place where he can and therefore must, achieve the best that he is capable of by way of perfecting his character, because it is only through the perfection of his character that the Kingdom of God will ultimately come. Those who are working for the spread of the Brahma message are working in this faith. It does not mean that no such claim has been put forward before. Every religion in the past has started as a universal religion and ended by being an ununiversal religion. The reason is that the followers of every such religion meant by universality, the universality of form and not of the spirit. If they had not been anxious to make the form of religion universal, and if they had understood how every nation that works righteousness is acceptable in the sight of God, and if they had

recognised in persons who were striving to love God in spirit and in truth, spirits kindred to their own, the need of a movement like the Brahma Samaj would never have arisen. As it is the chief aim of this movement is not to give a new theology to the world however liberal, or new doctorines however correct, so much as to keep alive in the breast of every man that spirit of living religion without which both theology and doctorines are entirely useless. It is the hope of every earnest member of the Samaj that this aim will be progressively realised in the years to come.

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## **The Islamic Revival.**

[Moulvi Mahomed Ali, M. A. (Cantab.)]

“And He it is who sends down the rain after they have despaired and unfolds His mercy” (*Alquran*).

There have been many momentous changes in the Moslem World in recent years. The Great War left the Moslem World desolate, but miraculous, indeed, has been the sudden revival after that. Turkey became a republic and attained a degree of independence which she had never enjoyed since the days of Abdul Aziz. The imbecile and debauchee Shah of Persia was deposed and a new free and united Persia was born under the aegis of Raza Khan Pehlevi. Amir Habib-ullah Khan's inglorious career was cut short by the hands of an unknown assassin and Amir Aman-u-llah Khan ascended the throne of Kabul under not very auspicious circumstances. But fate had decreed otherwise. In defiance of the enemies of his country's freedom he made his country free at the point of sword and now Afghanistan is proud to have direct diplomatic relations with most of the great powers of the world. Amir Abdul Karim put up a heroic

defence against the combined offensive of the most unscrupulous foes who wanted to usurp the rights and liberty of his motherland. And though he is gone, yet the seed that he has sown is still flourishing and will continue to grow until Morocco is also free like her sister countries Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan. Similarly there has been considerable awakening in other Moslem Lands *e. g.* Syria, Palestine, India, Egypt, China etc. In short the followers of the Prophet are astir everywhere and go wherever you like, you will find unmistakable signs of a revival. Turkey, Afghanistan and Persia have not only achieved political liberty but stimulated by their political freedom against such heavy odds they are trying to make progress in cultural, social and economic fields by leaps and bounds. But there progress is mainly directed towards the assimilation of Western sciences, Western methods and Western ideas, degenerating now to a blind imitation of the West and rising again at times to an intelligent adaptation of Western culture. Hence these phenomena, howsoever important and far-reaching in their consequences they may be, cannot strictly be described as a step towards a revival of Islam, although European writers may imagine them to be so. And though this transformation is bound to affect the future sequence of events considerably, yet it cannot be called essentially a religious transformation. For, no religious revival is worth its name unless it is based on the Quran.

The Quran embodies in itself the Islamic Civilisation. And no Moslem country or community can be said to further the cause of Islamic Civilisation or to revive it by neglecting the Quran and blindly following the Hellenic or Roman or Western Civilisations. A so called Moslem country may be advanced in Western arts and sciences and yet may be as far removed from the spirit of Islamic Civilisation as any pagan or Christian country. And a pagan country which is unconsciously following the dictates of the Quran may be nearer to the spirit of Islam. For we Moslems believe that the Quran is the source of good. The world cannot obtain peace and fraternity without acting upon the principles laid down in the Quran, knowingly or unknowingly.

What is Islamic Civilisation? Did it find expression in the culture of the Ommayas? Do the "Golden days of Baghdad" under the Abbaside Caliphs represent it? Or do Cordova and Granada typify it? No. None of these and not even all of them taken together. The type of Islamic Civilisation and a goal towards which the Quran invites all is the Khilafat-i-Rashida (rightly guided Khilafat). Those thirty years form the pinnacle of Islamic Civilisation and it is towards that ideal that Islam is taking the world. It is in short an establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. It is to give a message of peace to the strife-ridden humanity. It is the establishment of a human frater-

nity, a real living brotherhood of mankind. It is a Holy War against the forces of evil and misery. So long as there is evil in this world, so long as there is misery among its denizens, so long as artificial barriers of caste, colour, race, creed and country separate humanity into water-tight compartments, so long will the Muslims continue to wage an incessant war against the forces of evil and not rest until the Kingdom of God actually materialises.

So it is not to Turkey, or Persia or Afghanistan that we look for a regeneration of Islamic Civilisation. It is to Arabia that we look for a revival of Islam. Out of Arabia rose this edifice into being and out of Arabia once again will come its revivification and regeneration.

In Arabia an event of great potential importance which is likely to affect the future of Islam most has taken place. Sultan Abdul Aziz ibn-i-Saud has driven out the Sheriffian Dynasty from the Hijaz and has been proclaimed the king of the Hijaz by the inhabitants of that land. Ibn-i-Saud summoned an all World Moslem Conference in Mecca, the centre of the Moslem world. These two events which apparently do not look very important to superficial observers, represent in my opinion the opening of a new era for Islam. And I believe that the next great spiritual impact upon the soul of humanity is again to come from Arabia, the cradle of Islam.

This dramatic event—the occupation of the Hijaz by the Wahabee troops is on the one hand the culmination of a long drawn out political feud between the Wahabees and the Sheriffian forces, the first sparks of which were kindled more than a hundred years ago and ever since then have been smouldering, at times bursting into regular warfare, at times sinking into mere class hatred, until to-day we see the Sheriffian party completely annihilated; and on the other hand it marks the conquest of pristine Islam over the forces of reaction, the final victory of the puritanic Islam over blind formalism. It is the greatest blow that could be dealt to the forces of reaction.

## II

The so called Wahabee movement is not a new movement. Still less was it originated by Mohammad-ibn-Abdul Wahab after whom it was christened Wahabee. It is as old as Islam itself.

The Quran embodies in itself the basic principles of unlimited human progress and civilisation and the phenomenal rise of Islam was due to its teaching and the personality of Mohammad. As Lothrop Stoddard says "The rise of Islam is perhaps the most amazing event in human history. The closer we examine this development the more extraordinary does it appear. The other great religions won their way slowly, by painful struggle and finally triumphed with the aid of power-



ful monarchs converted to the new faith. Christianity had its Constantine, Buddhism its Asoka and Zoroastrianism its Cyrus, each lending to his chosen cult the mighty force of secular authority. Not so Islam. Arising in a desert land, sparsely inhabited by a nomad race previously undistinguished in human annals, Islam sallied forth on its great adventure with the slenderest human backing and against heaviest material odds. Yet Islam triumphed with seemingly miraculous ease and a couple of generations saw the Fiery Crescent borne victorious from the Pyrenees to the Himalayas and from the deserts of Central Asia to the deserts of Central Africa."

This amazing success was mainly due to the teaching of the Quran and the magnetic personality of the Prophet. And the Quran is as great a living force to-day as it was then. It has the same potentialities of rejuvenating old decrepit nations of the world now as it had at the time of the Prophet. It can work the same miraculous change as it once worked. And looking to the fact that no religious book has been handed down to us intact and free from interested interpolations and that the life of every religious reformer is enshrouded in mystery except that of the Holy Prophet, Mohammad (May Allah's peace be upon him) we cannot doubt that an Omniscient Providence decreed that the world should have but one guide, the Quran, and one leader, Mohammad, whose example would serve as a beacon light to those who had looked upon religious ideals

to be the dreams of visionaries. Survival of the fittest is the guiding rule of Providence in the spiritual world as well as the material. Just as the Quran contains all the teachings of the previous religions, similarly the Prophet Mohammad combines in his sacred person all the virtues and all the beauties of all his illustrious predecessors in the line of prophecy. So nature preserved only the fittest book and handed down every detail of the life of the most perfect man that ever lived as an ideal for the rest of mankind. Hence whenever Islam has met with a calamity sagacious and devout Moslems have turned to the Quran and Sunnat (traditions of the Prophet) for guidance. And guidance they have always found.

### III

“Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought that He may make them taste a part of what they have done so that they may realise their error and return to Him for therein lies their salvation” (Alquran).

Probably the greatest calamity that befell Islam was the invasion and sack of Baghdad by the Tartars. Coming from the North-East and inspired by mere brutish lust of conquest, bloodshed and rapine, they brought terror and devastation. These “cunning, ruthless and blood-thirsty marauders”,

to quote Professor Browne "destroyed every vestige of the Arab Civilisation." It is impossible to exaggerate either the historical importance or the horror of this great calamity that befell Islam and humanity in the first half of the thirteenth century. It destroyed the Arabian Khilafat resulting in the complete disruption of the Moslem Empire, and at a stroke swept away all the culture and civilisation of the Abbasside Khilafat. As Ibn-ul-Asir points out "The invasion of the Tartars was one of the greatest calamities and the most terrible of visitations which fell upon the world in general and the Moslems in particular, the like of which succeeding ages have failed to bring forth, for if one were to say that the world since God created it to the present time, was never so afflicted, one would speak truly, for history has nothing which approaches it."

In short it was indeed the worst of times for Islam. It was an age of darkness. No Religious Civilisation survived such a shock. Islam did. Out of that darkness shone the sun of renaissance and Islam took a new lease of life and the great revival had begun. It was on the 10th Rabi-ul-Awal 661 Hijra or 1263 A. D. nearly two years and a half after the sack of Baghdad by the notorious Halaku that Ibn-i-Taymiyya the father of Islamic revival was born. He was named Ahmad alias Abul Abbas Taqqiud Din, Ibn Taymiyyah. His father Shaikh Abdul Halim like a host of people fled before the arrival of this "Scourge of God" and reached

Damascus in 667 A. H. where his son received a sound education.

As the Quran says "God never afflicts a nation with misery unless they afflict themselves with iniquity," this great devastation which visited the world of Islam was mainly due to the inner corruption and degeneration of the Moslems. Halaku's was only a hand that gave a final blow to an edifice which was already tottering to its fall. Torn by internecine feuds the Central Government had lost its hold on the provinces. The provincial satraps thus freed from the control and guidance of a strong central government fell an easy prey to the temptations which such a position invariably offers. In their bid for hegemony they hardly had any scruples. The result was obvious. In preparing to cut the throat of his neighbour or to trick him out his possessions every one of them was digging his own grave. Besides, pursuit of personal comfort and luxury had become their end and aim of life. No doubt there were certain notable exceptions, but their position was rendered hopeless by a majority of unscrupulous despots.

Religiously the Moslem world then presented an equally decrepit picture. There were the Mottazallites the so called Rationalists of Islam on the one hand whose intolerance of their opponents' view was only equalled by their unscrupulous

tactics to persecute and prosecute those who had the audacity to differ from them. Even great leaders of religious thought like the illustrious Ahmad ibn-i-Hambal did not escape their torments. Under the garb of philosophy and free thought, they preached heresy and libertinism, with the result that the same moral debacle was witnessed in those days as we see in Europe and America to-day. On the other hand were the rigid formalists who had reduced religion to mere mimicry and blind following. Losing sight of the true spirit of religion they fought on forms. An illiberal, heartless, selfish and persecuting priesthood fanned the fanaticism of the ignorant. They suppressed every freedom of thought, discouraged every attempt to study the Quran or the Sunnat.

The uncompromising attitude of these fanatics naturally plunged the whole Moslem world into an unprecedented darkness. Such was the Moslem world which faced the lava of the Tartar irruption. Moslems, like a house divided amongst themselves failed to offer any resistance at all. All was gloom and waste. The Tartars swept all the fairlands of Islam "butchering whole populations, destroying cities, laying waste countrysides."

That time was, indeed, full of the darkest omens for Islam and the Moslems. It was at this epoch of travail and sorrow for all lovers of truth that the star of Ibn-i-Taymiyya rose to keep the

light of knowledge of Kitab and Sunnat alive amongst the Moslems, to introduce a more healthy tone amongst the people, to arrest the downward course of the Moslems towards heresy or rigid formalism, to revive the extinct Khilafat and to create de novo that spirit of Jihad which was the crowning glory of Moslems, in fact to save the social, religious, and political fabric from utter ruin. The darkest hour proved to be the harbinger of the dawn.

#### IV.

“ Certainly you have in the Apostle of Allah an excellent example. ” ( Alquran )

Ibn-i-Taymiyya's was a clarion call to his lost co-religionists to muster under the flag of the Prophet and follow the Quran and the Sunnat. He waged incessant war against rigid formalism and blind “ taqlid ” on the one hand and against libertinism of the Motazallite school, on the other. He condemned most emphatically the laxity of morals. He was as great an enemy of the pharisaical epicureanism of the rich as of the degeneration and ignorant fanaticism of the poor. He openly condemned the despotic government of his time as opposed to the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnat and advocated a return to Khilafat-i-Rashidah as an ideal form of Government.

This attitude could not but evoke a storm of opposition. The so-called rationalists called him an anthropomorphist trying to reverse the hands of the

clock of time, while the advocates of blind formalism anathematised him as a heretic and an infidel and ordered his books to be burnt. In fifteen years, *i.e.*, from 690 to 705 A. H. he was thrice summoned by different courts of Moslem Jurists to rebut these charges and every time his adversaries got the worse of it.

But the greatest service to Islam which Ibn-i-Taymiyya rendered was to organise the Moslems to meet the Tartar invasion. We have seen how his father had fled from "Harran" to "Damascus" when he was only six years old. The Tartars had continued their onward victorious march into Syria. In 678 A. H. when he was only 18 years old Kazan Khan, the great grandson of the notorious Halaku, invaded Hama, the frontier town of Syria. Nasir, Sultan of Egypt fought the Tartar hordes very bravely, but lost the battle. Damascus was in grave danger. Ibn-i-Taymiyya came to the rescue, organised the people and repulsed the marauders.

In 699 A. H. Tartar armies once more advanced on Damascus. Ibn-i-Taymiyya first organised the people and prepared them for a defensive war and then went to Kazan Khan as head of an Islamic delegation. Kazan Khan was prevailed upon by him and gave up the siege of Damascus.

In 702 A. H. Qatlu Shah, one of the chiefs of Kazan Khan, attacked Damascus and Jerusalem. Ibn-i-Taymiyya went to Egypt to persuade Sultan

Nasir to fight the enemies of Islam. With great difficulty Nasir prepared to give the enemy a battle. Ibn-i-Taymiyya was foremost in the battle array. A decisive battle was fought at Shaqhab known as the battle of Marj-us-Sighar in which the force of Tartar offensive was completely annihilated. This battle paved the way for the revival of the Khilafat in Egypt after its disruption in Baghdad.

But in spite of all this, Ibn-i-Taymiyya's opponents were busy scheming against him and in 705 A. H. he was sent for by the Sultan Nasir and put into jail for holding heretical views. In 707 he was set free. He began to preach in Egypt and so great was the popularity of his teaching that the clergy who were jealous of his rising power again demanded his imprisonment. From Cairo he was transferred to Alexandria Jail. In 709 he was set free. He again began to preach in Cairo with unabated zeal to the provocation of the clergy whose deadly animosity he had awakened by his scathing condemnation of rigid formalism. But he always met their hatred with love.

In 712 the Tartars once more invaded Damascus, so he returned to his home to prepare for the defence. And it was mainly through his efforts that they were once more repulsed.

For six years Ibn-i-Taymiyya confined his activities to the domain of religion, trying to restore Islam to its pristine purity purging it of the heresies



and corruptions which had brought about its ruin. "Mystic philosophers and scholastic theologians all fell alike under the lash of his denunciation" (Nicholson). Bowing to no authority but drawing his arguments from the Quran, the traditions of the Prophet and the practice of his Companions, Ibn-i-Taymiyya ruthlessly exposed the wrongs and malpractices of the then existing institutions. In 718 he was ordered by the Governor to refrain from giving fatwas on the question of divorce. He point blank refused, saying that truth must be told, irrespective of consequences. In 720 he was imprisoned for disobeying the orders of the "Government by law established." But so great was his popularity that he had to be set free, in 721.

For five years again the intrepid reformer carried on a ceaseless propaganda against the hierarchy of priesthood, gross fanaticism, saint worship, appalling ignorance and superstitious practices which were a discredit to the Islam of the Holy Prophet (May Allah's peace be upon him). His unequivocal condemnation of tomb worship, "pilgrimage" to the shrines of saints and prophets, vows, offerings and invocations.....abuses much more common now a days.....raised once more a storm of opposition. The climax was reached in 726 when 18 eminent jurists of Cairo condemned him to death as a heretic. The Sultan was reluctant to put to death a man whom he inwardly believed to be a true des-

endant of the Prophet (May Allah's peace be on his soul). But the clergy became furious and eventually he ordered him to be thrown into prison. But prison walls could not captivate his mind and he continued expressing his convictions in writing. In 728 after a short illness this protagonist of Islamic renaissance passed away peacefully. A few days before his death Shamsuddin, a minister of the Sultan of Egypt, came to Damascus and saw him. He begged to be forgiven for inducing the Sultan to put him (Ibn-i-Taymiyya) into prison. He replied "I forgive you and all my opponents and enemies, because they did it not knowing that I was right. I forgive the Sultan Nasir, because whatever he did, he did at the instigation of others. I forgive you one and all." The vast crowds which attended his funeral—we are told that there were 250,000 men including 15,000 women—bore an eloquent testimony to the profound respect in which this great reformer was held.

It is impossible to exaggerate the part played by Ibn-i-Taymiyya in the revival of Islam. Although he did not succeed in eradicating the abuses, yet he had sown a seed which continued to grow, watered by some of the most eminent theologians and scholars that Islam has produced. They carried on his work of reformation, until Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab appeared on the scene and gave it a fresh impetus.

## V

Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab after whom this reformation was called the Wahabee Reformation was born about 1720 A. D. in Najd. In his youth he visited some of the principal cities of the East. He saw everywhere manifest signs of corruption. Pure monotheism, which had always been the pride and glory of Islam had given place to saint-worship. Everywhere dead saints received the same adoration as God. They were invoked. Sacrifices were offered to them even as they were offered to God. Fraternity and brotherhood were unknown. Narrow-minded sectarianism had divided the Moslems into water-tight compartments each denying to the other the right of being admitted into the fold of Islam. The moral precepts of Islam were honoured more often by breach than by observance. Socially the corruption was as great as it was morally. Politically they were one and all either slaves of the worst form of absolute monarchy or of foreign domination. He was convinced that all this degeneration was the result of the neglect of the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet. Fired by the example of Ibn-i-Taymiyya, whose works he copied with his own hands, he determined to re-establish the Islam of the Prophet in its pristine purity. Accordingly he began to preach against these evils. His first convert was Mohammad bin Saud, the chieftain of Najd who married his master's daughter. Slowly and by degrees he disseminated the doctrines so ably propound-

ed by Ibn-i-Taymiyya. But he was not more lucky than his illustrious teacher. A storm of opposition gathered round him. Persecution and prosecution were freely used to suppress his movement.

The Turks whose ignorance of everything was equalled only by their blind fanaticism fostered by an unscrupulous hierarchy of priesthood whose vested interests Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab ruthlessly attacked, regarded him as an infidel and founder of a new religion. The space at my disposal does not permit me to give the details of this historic struggle between the light of reformation and forces of reaction. But it was the same as all such struggles have always been.

Hemmed in by enemies on all sides Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab broke into open revolt. This revolt was three-sided. Religiously it was directed against the blind adoration of the law (Fiqah) to the entire neglect of the Quran and the traditions, the saint worship and all other innovations which theological credulity had devised. Socially it was directed against the bacchanalian orgies of the rich and the suicidal customs of the poor. Politically it was directed against the tyrannical despotism of the Ottoman Sultans.

Ottoman Government was not slow to realise the danger of this movement, and a life-and-death-struggle ensued. This went on till the end of the eighteenth century when Abdul Aziz, son of Moha-

mmad bin Saud gained his first success. In 1801 he captured Karbala, and destroyed the cupola of the tomb of Hussain. Two years later he became the master of Hijaz. On the assassination of Abdul Aziz his son, Saud, continued the work of conquest and brought the greater part of Arabia under the Wahabite rule. Most of the sacred shrines were demolished and tombs razed to the ground. In 1811 Turkey deputed Mohammad Ali Pasha of Egypt to crush this movement. For nearly six years the Wahabees made a heroic stand against the Turks, but in 1818 their power was broken down by overwhelming odds and their capital Diriya, was taken by storm by the Turks. Since then the movement lost its proselytizing character, but continued to make a headway inspite of the severest persecutions by the Turks.

Ottoman Government carried on an incessant propaganda against their vanquished foes. Baseless calumnies were circulated to prejudice the ignorant masses and fan their fanaticism against them. They were called infidels, authors of a new religion. They were anathematised as enemies of the Holy Prophet ( May Allah's peace be upon him ) whose Kalima they were said to denounce. Stories of their alleged desecration of the Black Stone and demolition of the dome of the Holy Prophet's tomb were freely circulated. Grossly exaggerated accounts of their alleged excesses were given the widest publicity pos-

sible. The Government received the fullest amount of support from the clergy whose vested interests were as much at stake. Anathemas were issued that a Wahabee person and property could be seized by any one and dealt with according to his sweet will.

But persecution always helps reformation and this movement began to find supporters in every nook and corner of the Moslem world. In India it was championed first of all by Shah Waliullah of Delhi who had gone to Mecca and imbibed the spirit of the Wahabee Reformation. He returned to India with the determination of disseminating the teachings of the Quran and Sunnat ( Traditions of the Prophet ). He sowed the seed which was watered by his son Abdul Aziz. But the work which Shah Waliullah and his illustrious son carried on peacefully, suddenly received a fresh impetus at the hands of Ismail, the grandson of Shah Waliullah and Syyed Ahmad, a pupil of Abdul Aziz.

## VI

Born in 1201 A. H. or 1786 A. C. Syyed Ahmad exhibited extraordinary talents in his early days. The fame of Shah Abdul Aziz of Delhi attracted him and in 1816 he came to Delhi to have his lessons of theology from him. For three years he studied. But his was a bold mind and with a zeal characteristic of Ibn-i-Taymiyya and Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab he began to preach boldly condemning the abuses which had crept into the Islam of India.

He was joined by Ismail, a cousin of Shah Abdul Aziz as his first disciple. He toured all over India and wherever he went people flocked to his standard in thousands. In 1822 he made his pilgrimage to Mecca. On his return from the Holy Land in 1824 he heard of the tyrannies of the Sikh rule in the Punjab. He at once gave up preaching and unsheathed his sword. He crossed the frontier and began to preach a Holy War against the Sikhs. His efforts were soon crowned with success. He conquered the districts of Peshawar and Hazara and established a hierarchical Government there. But Syed Ahmad was not destined to enjoy the fruits of his victory long. Afghans who were suspicious of his religious activities deserted him and joined the Sikhs. In 1831 he was surprised by a Sikh army at Balakot and fighting bravely against overwhelming odds he and his first lieutenant Shah Ismail were slain. Having lost their chief the Wahabees evacuated the plains of Peshawar and Hazara and sought refuge in the mountainous parts of Swat and Bunair. Since then their activities were confined to carrying on a religious propaganda in India and a Holy War against the Sikhs.

On the annexation of the Punjab the British Government decided to stamp out this movement with all the severity which a strong and unscrupulous Government could bring to bear on it. The wars of extermination on the Frontier were accompanied

by wholesale arrests, and prosecutions of alleged Wahabees in India. The famous trial of Wahabees in 1870 is too well known to need any mention here. To be a Wahabee was considered a crime, punishable with death or deportation. Indeed, so fierce was the persecution that hundreds of them emigrated to Arabia and Afghanistan. The whole atmosphere was resounding with cries of vengeance. "No quarter, no mercy for the Wahabee" was the slogan of British statesmen. This spirit was reflected in the book written by W. W. Hunter in 1871 under the title of "The Indian Mussalmans." This book is an index of the temperament of British officials. Full of grossly exaggerated accounts of Wahabee excesses it shows how contemporary record may be clouded by personal venom.

Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan, the founder of the M. A. O. College, Aligarh, was the first to raise an emphatic protest against the mad policy of persecution and declared it to be contradictory to the letter and spirit of the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, which stated that no man would be persecuted for religious opinions. He said that if it was a crime to act according to the Quran and the traditions, then he was a criminal first and foremost. Sir Sayyed's protest put a stop to overt persecution, but inwardly it has continued all along, so that an Ahl. haddis, as the Wahabee calls himself to-day, is looked upon with suspicion.



But the Wahabee movement could not be crushed. In Arabia it continued to make a headway under the name of Alkhwans "Brothers of Faith" and more than half of Arabia is fraternally united. The Pan Islamic movement inaugurated by Jamal-ud-din Afghani owes its inception to the influence of Ibn-i-Taymiyya and Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab. In Egypt Mufti Abdahu popularised the writings of Ibn-i-Taymiyya and the present national movement owes not a little to his untiring work. In Tripoli and the Sahara the mysterious Sanusiya Brotherhood owes its origin to the influence of Mohammad-bin Abdul Wahab. The brave stand, which the Sanusiyees made against Italian aggression in 1911-12 and is still fresh in the memories of our generation, is an ample proof of the vitalising influence of this Reformation. In India though labouring under the constant dread of the British Government yet this Reformation seems to have worked wonders. It has caught hold not only of masses, but educated people are fast joining its standard. Disillusioned Westerners, and people sick of saint-worship find in this movement a haven of rest and a message of peace.

## VII

"And surely what comes after is better for you than that which has gone before." (Alquran.)

But the greatest impetus to the movement as I said in the beginning has again come from Arabia.

Last year Sultan Abdul Aziz Bin-Faisal Bin-Saud conquered Hijaz and was proclaimed king. Himself a young man, he has lent this movement the vigour and energy of youth. He is alive to the needs of propaganda and one of his first acts after his ascension to the throne of Hijaz has been to appoint missionaries to disseminate the teachings of the Quran and Sunnat amongst the ignorant and illiterate Bedouins (people of the desert). He is having the works of Ibn-i-Taymiyyah and Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab published and distributed gratis. The popularity which Ibn-i-Taymiyyah's works enjoy to-day in Arabia, Egypt, India and all countries where Arabic is read, is daily increasing and bears an eloquent testimony to the fact that the torch of light which he had kindled is still burning as strongly as ever.

## VIII

Before discussing this movement further, let us pause to consider the so called "Rationalistic" movement of the "Neo Motazalites" of India of which Maulvi Chirag Ali, Syed Amir Ali, S. Khuda Baksh are said to be the chief exponents. Plainly speaking this movement is only a mare's nest discovered by European writers on Islam. There was a movement led by the late Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan of Aligarh to popularize Western sciences and Western culture amongst the Indians. Along with that he wanted to "Rationalise" Islam, but this

movement proved an utter failure. And now no "Rationalistic" movement exists in India outside the books written by the above mentioned gentlemen. Their works might seem to Western scholars as a pinnacle of Muslim rationalism, but well-informed Moslems cannot help ridiculing these self-styled reformers whose books represent the death of the spirit of Islam rather than its revival.

Side by side with this movement came the Ahmadiya movement which intellectually was but a poor imitation of the Babi movement in Persia and the rationalistic movement of Sir Sayyad. This movement took its birth in the Punjab. Mirza Gulam Ahmad of Qadian (Punjab) was a man of vacillating character. Sometimes he would proclaim himself the Promised Messiah or Mehdi, the Guide. Sometimes he would take the role of a mere reformer. He died in 1907 and since then his movement has been gradually losing its hold upon the intellectual classes, until to-day it is merely an organized missionary society for the propagation of Islam and as such both of its wings—the Lahore and the Qadian—are doing meritorious work.

The causes of the failure of these movements are not far to seek.

Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan was dazzled by the glitter and pomp of the Western Civilisation and looked upon it as the panacea for all human ills. Had he lived to witness the present debacle,

he would have been sorely disillusioned. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was afraid of the British Government. Hence both the movements were devoid of the true spirit of Islam and as such became decrepit as soon as their moving spirits were gone.

The so called "Rationalisation" of religion in the eyes of these "neo-motazallites" as well as Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was synonymous with bringing the teaching of the Quran in accord with the Western conceptions and in doing so they did not hesitate to put wild interpretations on the verses of the Quran which the words hardly warrant. Moreover, they lost sight of the fact that in trying to make revealed knowledge subservient to human knowledge they destroyed the spirit and soul of religion. Human conception must be made to conform to the God-sent law and not vice-versa. Indeed, the mental state of a man who wishes to make God sit at the feet of Newton and Adam Smith to learn from them how he made his Universe and how he should manage it, deserves more pity than scorn. Sir Syed thought and Mirza Ghulam Ahmad followed him in this, that the physical sciences represented the last word in positive knowledge, and that economical laws expounded by the economists of the nineteenth century were as much binding upon God himself as upon Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill. Take the case of interest. Western economists said that no civilization was possible without capital and interest

and that a religion which prohibited interest was barbarous and incapable of civilizing its votaries. This was a law unto Sir Syed and his "fellow rationalists." They set upon removing this reproach and lost sight of the fact that in doing so they were striking at the very root of religion. Now capitalism and interest stand for selfishness, self aggrandisement, callous disregard of others' interests when they collide with yours, whereas religion stands for selfless service of God's creatures, self sacrifice, a moral fraternity and brotherhood of man. Surely a religion which advocates that no man has a right to spend on himself more than his barest needs require, the rest he should give in charity ; a religion which enjoins that if you have got one loaf, share it with the next hungry man you see, surely that religion cannot patronize capital and its allied institution, interest. And little did these advocates of rationalism realise that a time would come when all these economic idols would be shattered and a Government would be established which would work without capital, without interest and throw overboard the economics of Adam Smith, Hill and Marshall.

A movement based on intellectual slavery such as this was bound to fail.

Lastly they tried to divorce politics from religion trying to assign different spheres to them. This is an untenable position as politics without religion becomes unscrupulous and dishonest as the

modern European diplomacy is, and religion without politics becomes stale and visionary.

It can safely be asserted that the founder of these movements had failed to grasp the ideals of Islam properly. Their advocates even to-day exhibit a deplorable lack of knowledge of those ideals. Most of the books written by them are barren and devoid of any able or erudite exposition of Islam. And no movement can claim the allegiance of Moslems for a long time which does not take its stand on the fundamental position that the Quran and the Sunnat have moral supremacy over all other authorities.

## IX

“He it is who sent His Apostle with the guidance and true religion so that he may make it prevail over all other religions ; and Allah is enough for a witness.”

In order to appraise the true worth of this Reformation and its future potentialities it is best to examine the ideals for which this movement stands. Burckhardt has put the whole question in a nutshell, when he says,\* “Not a single new precept was to be found in the Wahabey code. Abdul Wahab (sic) took as his sole guide the Quran and the Sunnat (or

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\*Materials for a History of the Wahabys by J. L. Burckhardt, published in the 2nd volume of his notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys volume II page 112. Burckhardt has apparently been misled into supposing Abdul Wahab as the founder, whereas it was his son Mohammad. What Burckhardt says of the Turks is equally true of other Moslem nations.

the laws formed on the traditions of Mohammad); and the only difference between his sect and the orthodox Turks, however improperly so termed, is, that the Wahabys rigidly follow the same laws which the others neglect, or have ceased altogether to observe."

Briefly speaking, then, the term Wahabee Reformation is a misnomer. It is Islam, plain and simple. It is the Islam as Prophet Mohammad (May Allah's peace be upon him) brought it. Its aim is the restoration of Islam in its pristine purity, Islam stripped of the accretions of ages of theological disputes and philosophical wrangles, Islam shorn of all the superstitions which are disfiguring it and bringing it into disrepute. This movement aims at the revival of the Ideals of Islam which have been lost sight of by the Moslems. All that Ibn-i-Taymiyya and his school did was to popularize those ideals.

Lothrop Stoddard truly observes, "The Wahabee movement was a strictly Puritan Reformation. Its aim was the reform of the abuses, the abolition of superstitious practices and a return to primitive Islam. All later accretions, the writings and interpretations of the mediaeval theologians, ceremonial or mystical innovations, saint worship, in fact every sort of change were condemned. The austere monotheism of Mohammad was preached in all its uncompromising simplicity, and the Quran literally interpreted was taken as the sole

guide for human action. This doctrinal simplification was accompanied by a most rigid code of morals " (The New World of Islam, Page. 25.)

Ibn-i-Taymiyya and his school rightly maintained that the Quran is more than a religious book. It is a book of guidance for the faithful for all times and in all stages of human development. It embodies in itself the "Islamic Civilisation." It has a system of philosophy, a complete social system and a culture and art of its own. In short it is the source of supreme and perfect good and it prepared all mankind to realise that state of perfection. And the Prophet himself as an embodiment of the teaching of the Quran serves as the most perfect example for mankind, in all walks of life. His life story is a perennial source of inspiration and guidance for all.

The programme chalked out by Islam for the realisation of the kingdom of God on earth was a practical one. To give a practical demonstration of its worth, Mohammad established a brotherhood, the like of which the world has not seen. Khilafat Rashida or the rightly guided Khilafat was the realisation of the kingdom of God on earth.

Eternal verities never change and hence if at one stage of human development mankind realised the kingdom of God by acting upon those verities, it was but reasonable that they could reach the



same state of perfection by once again acting upon those verities.

Ibn-i-Taymiyya maintained that the secret of the success of Moslems lay in their following the Kitab and the Sunnat (the Quran and the Traditions). That explains why the "golden age" of Islam is the Khilafat Rashida when Moslems were most deeply religious unlike Christianity, whose balmy days are called "the Dark Ages."

To save the kingdom of God,—this fraternity of human beings from degeneration and decrepitude Islam sagaciously prescribed certain rules of conduct which alas, the Moslems have either neglected or defied and it is to that neglect and defiance that the present senility of the Moslems should be attributed.

First of all it anathematised sectarianism as infidelity. Sectarianism as such is foreign to the soil of Islam. The Quran says:—

"Those who split their religion and divide themselves into different sects, have nothing in common with you" *i.e.* are not your followers,

"Ye Moslems! Do not be like unto those (infidels) who splitted their religion and divided themselves into sects".

Islam is truth, the whole truth, and as such cannot have any room for schism. Differences of opinion may appear and in fact do appear, but

they cannot affect the fundamental principles of Divine Unity and the brotherhood of Man.

That sectarianism has been the curse of religion will be readily admitted by any student of human history. Sectarianism landed Christianity into the worst form of barbarism ever known. "It can surely be no exaggeration to say" says Lecky, "that the church of Rome has inflicted a greater amount of suffering than any other religion that has ever existed among mankind." Again he says, "The church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind." (Rationalism Pp. 32-35 Vol. ii.)

Undoubtedly it was sectarianism that was responsible for all this unparalleled barbarism. Hence in order to save religion from degenerating into water-tight and antagonistic sects it was absolutely essential to put a stop to it once and for all, otherwise religion like nationalism would defeat its own purpose and instead of establishing the kingdom of God would make this earth a real hell.

Second great obstacle in the way of the realisation of the ideal of brotherhood was the presence of artificial barriers of birth, rank or profession, wealth, class, caste or colour. Islam abolished all these distinctions and substituted only the one natural distinction of the fear of God and steadfastness to be righteous.

Islam thus laid the foundations of human fraternity on the solid rock of morality, by insisting

on the moral responsibility of man's action. All Moslems were declared equal, irrespective of birth, rank or profession. "Truly the most worthy of honour in the sight of God" says the Quran, "is he who feareth Him most." Again the Quran says "The faithful are brethren," therefore, make peace between your brethren. The prophet in his last sermon uttered the following memorable words :—

"Ye people assembled here: Hearken ye my these words, probably ye may not find me here next time. God has taken away from you the arrogance and pride of ancestry of heathen days. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab other than that which is secured to him by fear of God and righteousness. Ye are all the sons of Adam and Adam was of dust. Hence forth the property, person and honour of every male or female, howsoever humble he or she may be, is inviolable and sacred even as this day, this month and this place are". These eloquent words are too explicit to need any comment.

The third great obstacle in the way of the realisation of the Kingdom of God was the existence of priest-craft which has always been as jealous of its vested interests and divine rights as any despotic monarch. Islam abolished both at a stroke.

Islam does not, therefore, recognise any priest-craft. It insists that every person, male or female, alone and without the mediation of a priest, shall face his or her Lord and answer for his and her deeds. It enjoins everyone to steer the rudder of his or her life to the goal without the help of any intermediary. The Quran says :

“ God will not burden any soul beyond its power ; and every soul shall bear the good and the evil for which it has laboured.”

“ Every soul is mortgaged to its actions.”

Allah's help is as much ready to help any of his lay creatures as priests or the chosen few. Thus Islam engendered on the one hand a sense of responsibility for one's actions hitherto unknown and on the other by abolishing the old established institution of priesthood, it bred into its followers a spirit of self-dependence and self-help unknown to the followers of any other religion.

Moslems have, as I have said above, no authority to turn to except the Quran and the example of the Prophet. This has made of Islam a democracy, the like of which is not even dreamt of by the most advanced Western democrat of to-day, opening, thereby, the gates of unlimited progress for its followers.

But the greatest obstacle in the way of the realisation of the kingdom of God was the hostility of one religion to the other.

The real greatness of Islam lies in its solution of this problem and its attitude towards other religions supplies the clue. Before the advent of the Prophet, every religion regarded itself the sole repository of God's grace and its attitude towards other religions was one of hate or at most of indifference. But Islam changed all this. It enjoined as an article of faith a belief in the truth of all religions and all Prophets. The Cow, the second chapter of the Quran opens thus:—

“ This is the Book. There is no doubt as to its divine origin. A guidance to the righteous, who believe in the unseen, who keep up the prayer and out of that which we have given them they spend. And who believe in that which has been revealed to thee—the Last Revelation—and that which had been revealed to those before thee, and who believe in the life to come. They are on a right course from their Lord and these are they who shall thrive.” Again it says “Surely those who believe and those who are Jews and the Christians and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the last day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord and there shall be no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.”

Islam, therefore, enjoins that no one can be a true Moslem if he denies any religion or Prophet that preceded Mohammad (May Allah's peace be upon him). Further, it enjoins that no salvation is possible without leading a righteous life. Thus

in these two verses we have the kernel of Islamic teaching. Thus Islam laid the foundations of an inter-religious comity without which the realisation of the Kingdom of God would have been an empty dream.

So we must devote ourselves to the realisation of the ideal, the kingdom of God, not by denying the right of other religions to God's grace or by calling other Prophets impostors, but, by endorsing the truth of all, follow Islam which combines the accumulated knowledge of all the Prophets and seers of mankind and therefore represents the culmination of religious evolution.

These are the ideals for which Islam stands; and Ibn-i-Taymiyya dedicated his life to bringing home these ideals to his co-religionists. And it is for these ideals that the present revivalist movement stands.

Before the war the conviction was gaining ground that Christianity had outlived its usefulness. People of learning and intellect thought that the great achievements of modern learning had not only antiquated the doctrines of the humble "Pilot of Galilee" but had dispensed with the need of religion as a guiding factor, and that frank agnosticism was the only sound foundation for an individual's Philosophy of Life. It was further agreed that the Western Civilisation embodied in itself the loftiest ideals of mankind. But the Great War has given

a rude shock to these optimists. In the fateful year 1914, the forces of destruction which the Western Civilisation had both begotten and chained, were loosed with appalling suddenness and the culture of Europe stood in its true colours before the rest of mankind as no better than that of the barbarians. It found the Western nations sadly wanting in a moral backbone. The crisis found the "Civilised West" split into two different camps, each bent upon annihilating the other with all the engines of destruction that human ingenuity could devise. These pioneers of "humanitarianism" rushed at each other like hungry wolves.

When open war was succeeded by a hollow peace, the tragedy of the Western Civilisation came still more clearly into view and the gaping world was irresistibly forced to the conclusion that this Civilisation had gone morally bankrupt. With all the agony and woe, misery and destruction that the war produced it has left behind a legacy of deadly animosity between different countries, an accentuated class hatred manifest in every stratum of social and political life and an aggravated pessimism about the future of humanity. "As the war" to quote the famous epigram of Mohammad Ali, the head of Khilafat Delegation to England, "was fought to end all wars, so the peace is being made to end all peace." In fact the peace has revealed as the War had not even done, that the Western nations are yet far off from the realisation of the

great ideal of universal brotherhood of man or the Kingdom of God. It revealed beyond doubt the utter moral bankruptcy of the so called civilised nations of the West and the hypocrisy of their ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality.

And nature has not been slow in her retribution. To-day we see all the structures, economic, social, political which European Civilisation had built, fast going to pieces. Bolshevism is the nemesis of Nature, "who never lets go any evil unchastised." Bolshevism is a revolt against the tyranny of the Western Civilisation. Its aim is to strike at the root of political, social and economic idols which the Western world have us believe were God-sent. But Bolshevism is equally inadequate to solve the problems facing humanity at the present critical period in her history. For Bolshevism is essentially a reaction. All reactions go to the other extreme. Hence the world cannot find peace in Bolshevism either. Peace can come only by following a happy mean between the two. Islam, the emblem of peace, represents the happy mean to which the strife-ridden humanity must return after tasting of these extremes and therein shall mankind find that abiding peace and harmony which shall mark the realisation of the Kingdom of God on earth. And it is not the Turks who mark the dawn of that happy era, it is not the Afghans who promise to become the forerunners of that age. It is a man from the desert of Arabia who is the harbinger of that golden



age. With the Quran in one hand and an olive branch in the other, his will be a message of peace and harmony to his fellow beings. It might sound like a voice in the wilderness at first, but as truly as light is followed by day and darkness makes room for light, so will the world find a panacea for all its diseases in Islam, not the Islam of narrow-minded bigots or crazy fanatics but the Islam of the Prophet Mohammad (May Allah's peace be upon him). And it is that Islam which Ibn-i-Taymiyya preached and it is towards that Islam that Abdul Aziz invites the world.

Already we see signs of an awakening religious consciousness among the intellectual classes, a revolt against the gross materialism of the West, a return to the ideals of fraternity and brotherhood. The popularity of the Brahmo Samaj and Theosophical movements is a symptom of a deeper awakening. Mrs. Besant has gone so far as to proclaim her belief that a World Teacher is coming to guide humanity out of the darkness of strife and schism. But she is like the fair maidens of the parable, who waited for the arrival of the bridegroom, but slept at the time of his coming. Similarly the World Teacher came long ago when all the nations in expectation of his arrival were fast asleep. He came and delivered his message to expectant humanity. Although he is no more, yet his final message, the Quran and his example, the Traditions, are with us,

and in these two we have a living guide for the distressed humanity for all times to come.

The present disharmony and unrest points to one thing—that the old order is fast vanishing and out of its ruins the sun of a new order is rising to irradiate the whole world with its life-giving rays. That that new order will be nothing short of pure Islam is the belief of every true Moslem. And time alone can prove its soundness. The Quran says:—

“Do not grieve and do not despair, for you  
will be victorious if you are true  
believers.”

Let us also walk in the footsteps of our Great Master following his example in our quest and in doing so let us unite into one unbreakable brotherhood for the evolution of humanity in accordance with God's will. He guided humanity once and surely he can guide us even more positively and convincingly to-day and unite all who will hearken to his message in the common purpose of the realisation of the Kingdom of God.

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## **The Bahai Revelation—The Religious Need of the Time.**

[Bahai Spiritual Assembly, Fort, Bombay.]

In this day the religious formulae of the past—superstitions, creeds and dogmas—no longer ease the conscience of the world nor bring satisfaction to the mind of the individual adherent of these systems of thought. Humanity is in need of a spiritual power and knowledge with which to meet and solve the problems and conditions of this new day and age. Hence, the general changing and unsettled condition of the religious world which is causing a large and an increasing number of progressive people to quit thinking within the prescribed limits of the religious thought of the past, and to search diligently for those universal fundamental truths of the spiritual realm of life and being, the knowledge of which truths is the religion of God.

The Bahai Movement offers to the world an all-inclusive, universal, spiritual teaching, so broad that people of all races and of all creeds find place therein. It is essentially a religious movement, a spiritual teaching, free from the limitations of sect and constructive in its building upon the true faith

of the individual and upon the pure teachings of the past, thus increasing love and devotion to God and creating within each soul the desire to manifest the light of these divine attributes through brotherly service to one's fellowmen.

The object of the Bahai Revelation is the religious unification of all people. The teaching has come into the world to fulfil all divine teaching of the past. It stands as the goal toward which truth has always worked, through its appearance in the prophets sent unto various peoples of the past ages, and it is the beginning of that age of divine enlightenment and peace, the coming of which has been the theme of all revelations of the past—the Kingdom of God on earth. Thus the Bahai Movement establishes the universal religion which the foundation of inter-religious, inter-racial and international brotherhood and peace. It offers to mankind a practical basis of unity, one which is in direct line with the great world needs of this age, and it is paving the way for the great universal civilization which will evolve as peoples of all religions, races and nations unite both spiritually and materially into one great world people.

Man, being finite, cannot comprehend the essence of the Infinite God, which is beyond any and all human conception. However, through the manifestation of the Spirit of God or "The Word," that power which has spoken to the world through the prophets and chosen ones of the past, humanity

learns of God, knows His attributes, and is quickened by His Spirit.

Mankind needs and seeks spiritual guidance. This divine guidance has come to humanity through the instrumentality of the manifestations of God or the prophets or Revealers of Truth. These chosen souls have been the founders of the great religious world-movements. They have manifested the Spirit of God to the people of the world, and through them men have known God and have become quickened by the life of the Kingdom.

Though the personalities of the prophets differed, yet the divine power which spoke through each one was the same in spirit and in reality. Each prophet revealed God and the law of the divine kingdom in proportion to the needs of the age to which he ministered, and in terms and parables familiar to its people.

In their purity, all religious teachings are in perfect accord ; all teach the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. Human differences, imaginations and superstitions have been the cause of religious division, dissensions and disintegration, but true spirituality has ever been the source and mainspring of man's unity in religion and advancement in civilization. Each of the great world civilizations has had its conception and birth in a spiritually active religion, and the downfall of civilizations has been brought about by spiritually

lifeless religions, shrouded in forms and in superstitions.

As the former ages have had certain spiritual or religious needs, so this present and coming universal age, upon the threshold of which the world now stands, has its own peculiar spiritual and religious needs. The world is now ready for the spiritual unity and harmony of its people. The universal religion now comes, in order that the universal civilization may be realized.

On May 23, 1844, there arose in Shiraz, Persia, a young man, Ali Mohammed by name, who declared himself to be the Bab, or the forerunner of a great teacher, who was soon to appear with manifest signs of divine power. Through his teachings the religious unity of all peoples would be accomplished. Through his purity of soul and spiritual wisdom the Bab drew unto himself many followers who in turn promulgated his doctrines with so much fervour that within a short time many believed and joined his ranks.

The Bab was met early in his career of teaching by great opposition on the part of the Mussalman clergy and, at their instigation, was placed under military surveillance. In spite of this he continued his teaching exhorting the people to holiness and sanctity of living, in order that they might be fitted to meet the Promised One, shortly to appear, and to become as mirrors which would reflect his spiritual perfection. The first two years of his ministry

passed, at the end of which time, he was seized, by the order of the opposing clerical authorities, and thrust into prison.

The Bab's imprisonment lasted four years, during which time he taught his followers through letters and epistles. This was followed by a trial in which he was condemned to death upon the charge of heresy. With one of his followers, he suffered martyrdom in the cause of Truth in the City of Tabriz, Persia, on July 9th 1850. The Mission of the Bab being that of a precursor of a great teacher, the institutions and ordinances which he established were for the time being only. With the appearance of the Promised One, the Followers (Babis) were commanded to turn their faces unto him, when he, who was to come, would reveal his teaching, divine laws and ordinances, thus completing the foundation of the Kingdom on earth.

The Bab was not alone in being persecuted by the Mussalmans, for, with his martyrdom came upon his followers troubles of the most dire nature. Over twenty thousand of these willingly gave up property, family and life rather than deny or recant their faith. As late as 1901, there were one hundred and seventy souls martyred in this cause at one time in Persia.

During the days of the Bab's ministry, while his cause was being promulgated by his followers throughout Persia, there were many believers who never met him in person. Among these was

Baha'ullah, a young man of noble family, who warmly espoused the cause, publicly upholding and teaching it in Teheran. In 1852, shortly after the Bab's martyrdom, when the persecution of the Babis was at its height, Baha'ullah with others of the new faith, was imprisoned in Teheran, and later on with a number of the followers was sent in exile to Baghdad in Irak, Arabia.

During the exile in Baghdad Baha'ullah, through his teaching and spiritual insight, gradually brought calmness and assurance to the believers. As the movement gained strength the clerical authorities began to show fear. This led to an international arrangement made between the Turkish and Persian governments by which Baha'ullah with a band of followers was ordered to a more distant exile in Constantinople. In April, 1863, on the eve of his departure from the land of Irak, Baha'ullah declared himself to be the one whose coming the Bab had foretold.

From Constantinople the exiles were sent to Adrianople, where they remained till 1868, when they were finally sent to the fortified town of Akka (Acre), a penal colony on the Mediterranean just north of Mt. Carmel in Syria. There, in the land of Carmel, where "the coming of the Lord" in this latter day had been foretold by the prophets, Baha'ullah lived and taught many travelling from great distances to receive instructions from him, while others received teaching through his writings.



With the coming of Baha'ullah, the mission and teaching of the Bab were fulfilled and completed; so from that time on, the movement became known as the Bahai Movement and the believers hitherto called Babis, became known as Bahais, this new name being a derivative of Baha. In the spring of 1892 the mission of Baha'ullah being finished he passed way quietly from this world.

During Baha'ullah's ministry his revelation was complete, yet his cause was not explained nor established in the world in general. To this end he, in his testament, as well as in various parts of his teaching, commanded his followers upon his departure to turn their faces towards his eldest son, Abbas, more widely known by the title "Abdul-Baha" whom he had chosen as their spiritual guide; "The Center of the Covenant" of God to the people of the world, the expounder of his teachings, the one who would establish this great movement and to explain and demonstrate it before the world; the one upon whose shoulders his mantle would fall.

Abdul-Baha was born in Teheran, Persia, on the 23rd May 1844, the day upon which the Bab first declared his message. During all the trials and vicissitudes of the mission of Baha'ullah, Abdul-Baha was at his right hand promulgating his cause and serving his followers.

Abdul-Baha wished to be known as the servant of humanity. He sought no higher station than

this, yet when one understands all that this means one realises the combination of humility and exaltation which it implies. He made but one claim for himself, as to his spiritual station, that of service in the path of God. He signed himself "Abdul-Baha Abbas" which being translated is "Abbas, the Servant of Baha." Abdul-Baha was acknowledged by the Bahais as their spiritual leader, and the one to be emulated in the teaching of this great faith in the world. He, through his example, brought the spiritual life of Baha'ullah within the reach of his followers, the Bahais.

Abdul-Baha's life was one of active service to humanity. There was no element in the daily life of this world too small to receive his attention. The great motive power manifesting through him was not of this world but was of God. He worked to serve God, yet by serving God he served mankind. From his early childhood till his 64th year he was an exile and a prisoner; yet the light of his life and teaching reached and penetrated to the far corners of the earth. For forty years Abdul-Baha was a prisoner in the fortress of Acca held there by the Sultan of Turkey for no other reason than that his teaching was bringing enlightenment and freedom of thought to all who came within the radius of its power. With the fall of the old despotic regime of Turkish government and the establishment of a constitutional rule, which occurred in the summer of 1908, Abdul-Baha was liberated from prison, and became

free to come and go as he willed. During the summer and fall of 1911 he visited England and France, where he spent some months in teaching; and in 1912 he spent eight months in America, travelling and teaching from coast to coast, visiting many cities and towns where he had friends and where there were those to listen to his explanations of religious questions and seeking that vitalizing spiritual force which so characterised his person.

In both America and Europe, the pulpits of many Christian churches of various sects and cults, institutions of learning, and the platforms of philosophical and humanitarian movements of various types sought Abdul-Baha and welcomed his message of the oneness of the World of Humanity. The people who heard him were rejoiced by the spirit which he radiated, and those who came within the field of his spiritual love and power, were strengthened and inspired.

Abdul-Baha had the power of really penetrating the souls of men, of understanding the needs of each individual soul, and of ministering to them in the most beneficial manner. He was the spiritual physician of humanity. Many beautiful and touching incidents are related in the East, of the way in which, through long suffering and kindness, he won the hearts of those who, formerly because of their prejudices, were his enemies. Caring for the sick and protecting the oppressed formed a large part of his daily duties.

Abdul-Baha's power was that of love. In going into his presence something within one's soul seemed to respond to his soul. Thus a spiritual bond was made which was most far-reaching, for it was of the nature of divine love and always remained with one. Through his life and example, he taught people the life and the way of the Kingdom. He had message for every one, and as one met and came in contact with him it was as if a new force were added to one's nature. The power of the love of God was brought very close to those who came in contact with Abdul-Baha.

From many countries people of different beliefs went to Abdul-Baha to receive spiritual help, and upon leaving him returned to their various homes to share with others the joy and the assurance of his spiritual message and to follow in his path of service. His was the perfect life, and as the people came in contact with him they found in him the centre of the spiritual light of this new day and age. From that centre was flowing the regenerative Bahai Spirit, which is making things anew, re-establishing religion, reviving faith in God and uniting humanity in the one universal brotherhood of God's Kingdom. On November 28th, 1921, his glorious service finished in the body, he ascended to the Kingdom of Abha.

The movement under the Bab was practically confined to the Ismalic countries. During the ministry of Baha'ullah the message was taken to various other countries of the Orient and under the

ministration of Abdul Baha it spread all over the world. There are not only centres of Bahai teaching in China, Japan, Burma, India, Persia, Turkistan, Caucasia, the Turkish countries and in Egypt, but there are strong Bahai centres in France, Germany, England and throughout the United States and Canada. This growth has been a comparatively slow but steady one. It is not limited by religious nor racial conditions, which is proven by the many heterogeneous elements which this cause is assimilating and fusing into one element, which is the world type of man.

The universal principles of Truth, which the Bahai Movement is teaching, are already clearly seen in the way in which this teaching appeals to people of all religions, races and nationalities. When a soul becomes touched by the Bahai Spirit he becomes a citizen of the world, quite free from the limitations of his former environment, while his social and religious prejudices inherited from his forefathers and environment are changed into a desire to do something toward world brotherhood through active service to his fellowmen. In the Bahai meetings one sees Christians, Jews, Moslems, Zoroastrians, Hindus and Buddhists mingling as brothers and eating at the same tables.

The collective writings of the Bab are known as the *beyan*. These treat, chiefly, of the coming of Baha'ullah, containing exhortations to the people calling them to purify themselves and

prepare to meet the Promised One that they might be fitted to serve him.

Baha'ullah wrote many treatises in the form of books and epistles in which he demonstrates the oneness of the spirit of all of the former religious teachings ; also treating of the present teachings in its relation to the religions of the past. A number of these writings were in reply to special questions asked by men of learning and were, therefore, written from various points of thought, Moslem, Jews, Christian, etc.

The writings of Abdul-Baha are many and are chiefly in the form of letters or Tablets explanatory of the Spirit and Teaching of Baha'ullah. Abdul Baha's life of service to humanity is his method of teaching, through which means he gives life, vigor and a penetrative force to his words. His oral teaching much of which is reported and circulated in manuscript and in printed form, consists of explanations, given to various enquirers, regarding the Cause, and its Doctrines, together with exhortations to the followers and certain principles and truths, the pursuance of which is conducive to the best secular as well as spiritual welfare of mankind.

According to the Bahai teaching heaven and hell are conditions of the soul. The soul which lives in God is in that Divine state called Heaven, while one not yet awakened to the Glory of God is in a state of darkness or hell. The coming of the

Kingdom of Heaven on earth has been the one theme of Christ and the Prophets. All have spoken of the epoch in different terminology, but in reality they all spoke of the one great age of divine enlightenment a time when faith should replace unbelief, and when divine knowledge should replace ignorance and superstition, and the Bahai cause teaches that the World is now in the early dawn of that new day and age.

In addition to the purely spiritual teaching of Baha'ullah, he ordered certain changes in the manners and customs of people, through the observance of which the world in general will be helped both materially and spiritually. He exhorts the Bahais to be tolerant, and in no way to separate themselves from other people, nor denounce those of other beliefs. All men are free to believe as they wish, but all are advised to unite in faith and to lay aside the prejudices and superstitions of past ages. Warfare should be abolished and international questions settled by arbitration. A universal language is favoured as a means of bringing people together in unity. Legislation should be representative. The Bahais should be peaceful and law-abiding citizens. Their thought should be humanitarian before all else. Faith without works is not acceptable. One's worship should be supplemented by a pure and useful life in the world. Men and women should marry. Asceticism is discouraged. Monogamy is taught. Harshness and hatred are to be overcome

by gentleness and love. Man should not use intoxicants as a beverage. Opium and kindred drug habits are denounced, as is also gambling.

Baha'ullah forbade mendicity, slavery, cruelty to animals and many other abuses which the western civilization has already remedied; so it is hardly necessary here to mention them. The following of these ordinances is already produced in its good effect in many Bahai centres throughout the world, and good fruits are coming therefrom.

Prayers supplemented by a pure and useful life in this world form the elements of true worship. Faith without works is not acceptable. Every man should have an occupation which conduces to the welfare of humanity, the diligent pursuance of which is in itself an act of worship.

In this Cause there is no priesthood nor clergy. Each soul approaches God in prayer without sacred rite or ceremony. Temples open to all people of all religions are to be provided for reading, meditation and prayer. These are to be surrounded by hospices, hospitals, asylums, schools, universities etc., the whole group of buildings to be known as a "Mashreq-ul-Azkar", which translated from the Arabic literally means "The dawning point of the mentions (of God)." In these institutions is symbolized both the spiritual worship and the humanitarian service as taught by Baha'ullah.



A few years ago in the city of Eshkabad, in Russian Turkistan, a Mashreq-Ul-Azkar was built. At present the Bahais throughout the world are uniting in the work of building the first Mashreq-Ul-Azkar in America, which is to be erected upon the shore of Lake Michigan near the city of Chicago.

Of the Mashreq-Ul-Azkar to be built in Chicago, Abdul Baha has spoken as follows :—

“ Now the day has arrived in which the edifice of God, the divine sanctuary, the spiritual temple, shall be erected in America. The accessories of the Mashreq-Ul-Azkar are numerous. Among them are schools for orphans, the great college for the higher arts, hospital, home for the cripples and hospice. The doors of these places are to be opened to all sects—no differentiations. When these accessories are completed, and, by God’s help the departments fully systematised, it will be proved that the Mashreq-Ul-Azkar is to human society a great bounty and a great blessing. In brief, through the unlimited bounties of God, I am hopeful that the beloved ones of God in America may be aided and confirmed in founding this mighty and solid foundation and gradually annexed thereto its accessories. When these Institutions, college, hospital, hospice, and establishments for the incurables, university for the study of higher sciences and giving post-graduate courses, and other philanthropic buildings are built, its doors will be

opened to all nations and religions. There will be absolutely no line of demarcation drawn. Its charities will be dispensed irrespective of colour or race. Its gates will be flung wide open to mankind—prejudice toward none, love for all. The central building will be devoted to the purpose of prayers and worship. Thus, for the first time, religion will become harmonized with science, and, science will be the handmaid of religion, both showering their material and spiritual gifts on all humanity. In this way the people will be lifted out of the quagmires of slothfulness and bigotry.”

Through a broad and liberal education along scientific, material and intellectual lines, balanced by a knowledge of man's moral and spiritual duties and relation to God, the Bahais believe that the superstitions of the past will disappear and with them prejudice and ignorance which have always made for man's limitation. The Bahai movement stands strongly for the freedom and education of women, even going so far as to teach that it is more necessary for parents to educate their girls than their boys.

Religious differences have been the chief cause of warfare, while religious sympathy and understanding have always made for peace and prosperity. Prior to the beginning of the Bahai movement, little or nothing was being taught or written about peace, arbitration, universal language, suffrage nor other universal institutions. During the past

three-quarters of a century, however, the world has awakened to the necessity for these institutions for which the Bahai Cause stands; and now the most enlightened people are realizing that the lack of spiritual or religious understanding with the accompanying lack of moral perception, is the real cause of all human ills and cataclysmic conditions through which the world is now passing.

While Baha'Ullah's teaching was ahead of the world of his day, the world of to-day is realizing more and more the value of that teaching. The supply and the demand are now meeting, from which better conditions will result.

The Bahais believe in a federation of all nations, both large and small, and the establishment of a world parliament for judicial settlement of international disputes. In treating of this matter of peace between the nations, Abdul-Baha says, "A tribunal will be under the power of God, and under the protection of all men. Each must obey the decisions of this tribunal, in order to arrange the difficulties of every nation." About fifty years ago in the Book of Akdas, Baha'Ullah commanded the people to establish Universal Peace and summoned all nations to the Divine Banquet of international arbitration so that the question of boundaries of national honour and property and of vital interests between nations might be decided by an arbitral court of justice. "Remember these precepts were given more than half a century ago—at that

moment no one spoke of universal peace—nor of any of these principles, but Baha'Ullah proclaimed them to all the sovereigns of the world. They are the spirit of this age, the light of this age, they are the well being of this age.

The imaginations and superstitions of the religious systems of the past, are against common sense and science, for these are but the thoughts of man of the ages. The universal basic spiritual truths of religion, upon the contrary, accord with science. When men understand the true principles of religion no conflict will be found between them and the material sciences.

According to the Bahai teaching, spirit or life force is of five kinds, vegetable, animal, human, and divinely spiritual life of the soul, and the Infinite unknowable Spirit of God. Man was created man, a species apart and above the vegetable and animal conditions. Through the spiritual influences of the manifestations of God's Word, or the Prophets, man becomes characterized by the divinely spiritual qualities, and adds to his human nature the spiritual nature, or the life eternal.

The Bahais see true religion itself as a scientific fact, for to them the true philosophy of religion is the statement or the science of the higher spiritual laws of that plane of being, known as the Kingdom of God. Through the working of these divine laws and a knowledge thereof, humanity arises from the state of spiritual ignorance which characterizes the

so-called "natural" or savage man, and becomes quickened by the process of the higher life. Thus through knowledge of the basic principles of religion, and through the wisdom which the living spirit of religion instils into the soul, the truly religious man is freed from the thralldom of ignorance and superstition, which imprisons the soul, and he finds ample opportunity and scope for the development of the highest and noblest virtues peculiar to that plane of being, known as the Kingdom of God.

One of the greatest obstacles to overcome before universal brotherhood and peace can come is the natural lack of confidence and understanding between the Oriental and Occidental peoples. The Orient has always been the source of the world's spiritual inspiration, while in the Occident has appeared the fruition of this inspiration in the form of a highly evolved civilization. Through the Bahai teaching this chasm between the East and the West is bridged, and for the first time in history the Orient and Occident are meeting on a common ground of sympathy and understanding.

Co-operation is the basic principle upon which all institutions should be founded. The co-operation of all for the good of all. Laws should be so regulated that it will be impossible for one man to enrich himself at the expense of another. Through the proper adjustment of political and commercial relations between individuals and nations all will live in harmony, happiness and in plenty.

## **Judaism.**

(Miss R. Reuben B.A., Principal, Israelite High School, Bombay.)

“Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.”

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

“And thou, Israel, shall be holy, for I the Lord thy God am a holy God.”

“In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”

Judaism is one of the great historical religions of the world. It goes back through centuries to the dim beginnings of history. It has come into close and tragic contact with all the great civilisations of ancient, medieval, and modern times. It saw the rise and fall of Chaldea and Babylonia, Assyria and Egypt, Media and Persia, Greece and Rome. It witnessed the triumph and the decline of the great medieval empires of both East and West. And it has survived down the ages to modern times.

And through all these centuries of its existence it has suffered. The Jewish nation as a political

entity was crushed out of existence in the impact of warring nations, the Jewish people was exiled and scattered among hostile neighbours, the Jewish religion was misunderstood, despised, persecuted. The Jew exists, however, and his religion still lives, until, even to-day in world politics it is a force that has to be reckoned with.

A tiny atom in a seething mass of nations,—hated, maligned, massacred,—how has the Jew survived? What is the secret of his persistence? What is the key to this mystery? It is the religion of the Jew which has preserved him, which has burnt like a perpetual light through ages of intense gloom, which has kept alive in the Jewish heart the twin flames of aspiration and hope, which illumined his path to noble endurance, high endeavour, and great achievement.

What is this religion which explains one of the miracles of history? What are the elements of its strength, what the ideals that have inspired it, what the hopes that have sustained it? What are the hidden forces of this religion that have made martyrs of men and women, old and young, sage and simpleton, who have clung to it in spite of ages of misery and persecution, and who have ever been ready to die for it when one word of recantation would have spelt life, peace and prosperity?

Judaism, as a historical and progressive religion has been a living religion and as such has grown and developed and is still growing and developing.

to-day. But the great eternal verities within have always been the same, and it was these fundamentals that the prophets and teachers of Israel sought to cherish and uphold. They, blazing with righteous anger, denounced all external forms that crushed the spirit within and hindered its free growth and expression. The spirit of these prophets of old did not die with them. It is still very alive and active. Jews have ever been ruthless iconoclasts. Their voice has always been raised against dead formalism, their hand has ever been ready to destroy the petrifications and encrustations of ages. Thus has the spirit within been preserved intact from generation to generation. The light of Judaism has burnt through centuries and has always burnt clear, for eager and earnest hearts and hands have ever been ready to trim the lamp and keep the flame bright and pure.

This spirit of Judaism, however, has nowhere been definitely formulated. Judaism has no articles of faith as in some other religions. During the latter days of controversy with contemporary religions, several attempts were made to systematise and formulate the main concepts of Judaism but they never received any authoritative sanction and never had any universal binding force. The dry formulations of the head never much appealed to the Jew whose religion had its origin in the living springs of the heart. But though no formal creed exists, the fundamental concepts of the religion



stand out clear, for they permeate every thought and act of the Jew, every belief and rite, every form and ceremonial of Judaism.

Judaism has been described as an Ethical Mono-theism. Ethics have always, from very early times, had a predominant place in the religion of the Jews. A Gentile neighbour once came to Rabbi Hillel, a Jewish teacher of the century immediately before Jesus Christ, and said to him that he would embrace Judaism if it were taught to him while yet he stood on one leg before the sage. The gentle Hillel said to him, "Listen—What thou hatest do unto no man—that is the whole law, the rest is all commentary." Another sage of a later date says that the first question put to man at the last judgment will be, not "Did you believe this or that?" not, "Did you fulfil this or that ritual law?" but, "Did you deal honestly with your fellowmen?" Rabbi Akiba, another famous teacher of the second century, put down the verse "Love thy neighbour as thyself" as the fundamental principle of the Jewish law. Rabbi Simlai, four centuries after Hillel, in his interesting attempt to reduce Judaism to its fundamentals brought it down to the three maxims of the prophet Micah, "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God," and then to the two of prophet Isaiah, "Keep ye judgment and do justice." Thus, Love, Justice, Mercy are laid down as the fundamentals of Jewish

Law and are exalted above mere mechanical acceptance of formal beliefs and mere mechanical observance of ritual law.

Though ethics form an important element of Judaism they are not the whole of Judaism. There is something more and a great deal more. The Jew is something more than a good man who deals honestly with his fellowman, who loves mercy, does justice and loves his neighbour as himself. Underlying right conduct and permeating it there are always right principles. And underlying the right doing of the Jew, purifying and strengthening it are certain right beliefs regarding God and regarding man's relationship to him.

These beliefs reduced to the root ideas are found in what is required by way of profession from a proselyte. The Jews were rarely active proselytisers, for they, believing in right doing, said, "The righteous of all nations have a portion in the world to come." But those who wished it were admitted into the Jewish fold on their accepting the doctrine of the unity of God and abjuring idolatry. The Talmud says that he who repudiates the service of other gods is a Jew.

One important test of fundamentality is the importance attached to doctrines in cases of extremity. There were many instances in history when Jews were reduced to extremity and had to make up their minds to give up all but the bare essentials

of their religious beliefs. One instance in point is the persecutions to which the Jews were subjected in the reign of the Emperor Hadrian. During these cruel times an assembly of Rabbis decided that a Jew must yield his life rather than accept safety from the Romans if it involved the three offences of idolatry, unchastity and murder. Thus, together with a belief in the sanctity of human life and in the sanctity of human relationships is emphasised a belief in the unity of God and in his spirituality.

The Hebrew scriptures have supplied one text to the Jew which has dominated his life and history. It has influenced his thought and has guided his conduct. It has been incorporated in his liturgy and is repeated by him morning, noon, and night. It is the first thing taught to him at his mother's knee and lisped by him as a child; it is the last thing breathed out with the dying breath of the Israelite. It is the confession of his faith and with it on his lips he has met many a cruel death with a cheerful smile. This text is the familiar *Shema* "Hear, O Israei, the Lord our God the Lord is One."

But this great monotheistic conception in Judaism is no cold abstract idea. The Jewish conception of God is not that of a mere metaphysical or philosophic deity, aloof from the world, remote from man. This idea, which is another of the fundamentals of Judaism is embodied in the words that immediately follow the text quoted above. "And

thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." The relationship here between man and God is no metaphysical relation but a close, personal, almost human relationship. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort thee," said the Lord.

The description of Judaism as an Ethical Monotheism thus stands proof. Judaism takes its stand on Monotheism and on Ethics. Three short texts describe Judaism and give its essence.

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one."

"And Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might."

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Believing in God, loving God, loving man—right thought and right feeling issuing in right action—that is Judaism.

But the term Ethical Monotheism embodies another great idea, which is also a fundamental conception of Judaism. The ethics on which Judaism takes its stand lead back to the idea of an ethical God, a God of righteousness and holiness the idea of moral perfection, from whom as from a fountain flow all goodness and truth. Understanding ethical Judaism so, the heart of the religion is to be found in another text, "And thou, Israel, shall be holy, for I the Lord thy God am a holy God."

A holy God, a holy people—that is the quintessence of Judaism.

What ideas are embodied in the Jewish conception of a holy God? First and foremost stands God's unity which is unique for "there is no unity like unto his in any way." He is perfectly and ineffably one. To the Jew, Dualism or Trinitarianism are incomprehensible ideas. They can recognise no distinct independent principle of evil. Though Satan is mentioned once or twice in the Hebrew Scriptures he is one of the agents of God and can do only what God wills him to do. Says God, "I am the Lord and there is none else. There is no God beside Me. I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I am the Lord that do all these things." And again, "I, even I, am He and there is no God with Me. I kill and I make alive. I wound and I heal. There is none that can deliver out of My hands." Jewish monotheism is a pure uncompromising monotheism.

Next to unity stands God's spirituality. He cannot be compared to anything else in the world, He cannot be represented in any material form. Idolatry has no place in Judaism. Nor can there be any mythology. Moses, the founder of the nation, says to the Israelites in the earliest days of their history, "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves that ye saw no manner of form in the day that the Lord spake unto you." And this one unique spiritual God fills the universe with his

presence. "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into the heavens, Thou art there, and if I make my bed in the grave, behold Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the nethermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy right hand hold me. If I say surely the darkness shall be night, even the darkness hideth not from Thee, but the night shineth as the day." But this Almighty God, whose presence fills the universe is also very nigh unto those that call upon him, and he is with him also that is of a humble and contrite heart. For he is a God of mercy and love "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in loving-kindness and truth, keeping loving kindness for thousands of thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin;" and withal a God of justice, "That will by no means clear the guilty" but who at the same time desires not the death and destruction of the wicked. A beautiful legend says that when the Egyptians were over-whelmed by the waters of the Red Sea in their pursuit of the Israelites the angels of heaven took up a song of triumph. But God rebuked them saying, "When so many of My creatures are suffering, how can you sing a song of triumph?"

The second element of Judaism is the holiness of Israel consequent upon the holiness of the God of Israel. Israel is designated the people of God, and

God's people is called upon to be holy because the Lord their God is holy.

All laws given to Israel and all ritual laid down for him mark out a definite path and lead to holiness as the goal. They are calculated to invest the believing and observing Jew with a high degree of purity and holiness. The daily life of man is brought into conscious and intimate contact with the divine. Judaism teaches that the whole of life is holy. There is no function so low and insignificant as cannot be sanctified by the manifestation of God in it. And therefore the whole of life is sought to be regulated and sanctified. This conscious hallowing of life is the aim underlying all the innumerable laws that to modern ideas seem to hedge in the liberty of the individual.

The Rabbis say that Jewish Law ennobles the simplest and commonest acts of life and elevates them into a service of God. Eating and drinking, marrying and begetting children are all religious acts. The Hebrew word for marriage means "sanctification." The simple pleasures of the senses are all holy. The scent of a flower, the grandeur of mountains, the majesty of thunder and lightning, all make the Jew lift up his hand in adoration to the Deity. To inhale the fragrance of a flower, to watch the changing beauty of the sea can be a religious act according to Judaism. Judaism is perhaps the only religion in the world that has elevated the appreciation of the beauty of

nature into a conscious religious act. Judaism recognises that man does not live by bread alone, but it also recognises that man cannot live without bread. It has therefore come to the wise conclusion that it is not right to ignore a large part of his life which is there whether you accept it or not. Judaism accepts it and sanctifies it.

Asceticism, thus, has no place in Judaism. It makes no invidious distinction between body and spirit, between the earthly and divine elements in man, saying, "This is Divine; cherish it. This is earthly; suppress it." The body is God's temple; it cannot, therefore, be looked upon as something to be suppressed. Bodily desires are not earthly and so to be crushed out of existence. "Defraud not thyself of a good day, and let not the portion of a good desire pass thee by." All human instincts and passions and desires are to be hallowed and idealised. Not to enjoy the gifts of life is to insult the graciousness of the Most High, for they are all gifts of God. "In the hereafter every man will be called upon to account for the earthly pleasures he has rejected." What is not dedicated to God says to Evil, "Be thou my god." Judaism, consecrating what is known as "the flesh" has enjoyed life in holiness and purity, and therefore drunkenness, gluttony, and all social excesses and moral abnormalities were things that had no existence for the Jew.

Jewish Law has brought heaven down to the earth and transfused life itself with purity and



holiness. But this means that the life of the Jew is bound by law. He has to accept the yoke of the Law from the earliest age. In fact, legend has it that the unborn souls of all Israel, of all future generations, were present when Moses gave the Law to Israel at Mount Sinai. This yoke of the Law, however, is no burden and imposition. It is always spoken of as a joy and a delight. There is no element of compulsion in it. It is a duty voluntarily accepted and joyously fulfilled. Joy is the prevailing note in Jewish life. The Jew rejoices in his God, he rejoices in the Law, he rejoices at his festivals, he rejoices in the heart of his family surrounded by happy smiling faces of his wife and children. In spite of cruel oppressions and intolerable sufferings the Jews have ever been a cheerful and optimistic people, because of the sanctity attached to the common every-day things of life and of the acceptance of Joy as an element of religion.

Believing in joy and beauty as essentials of holiness, the life of the Jew has been full of the spirit of joy, beauty and holiness. His ritual and his festivals are full of beautiful symbolism. The Sabbath is not a day of gloom and austerity. It comes in as a bride, bringing with it the joy and beauty of rich, pulsating, ever-new, ever-renewed life. The Sabbath light kindled in the home by the mother to usher in the holy day, sheds a glow over the rest of the week and relieves its dullness. The Passover, the festival of Liberty, when the Jew rejoices over

his deliverance from the yoke of slavery ; the Shab-busth, the festival of Law, when he rejoices over his acceptance of the yoke of the Law ; the Sukkoth, the festival of Thanksgiving, when he dwells in booths, and so renews his touch with nature and draws ever fresh strength from it and thanks the God of nature for His bounties ; the Chanukah, the festival of Dedication, when he dedicates himself afresh year after year to the service of God,—all these festivals are full of beautiful symbolism, that permeates the life of the Jew with the beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty and joy.

But all the ritual and ceremonial law meant to sanctify and beautify life, was but a means to the end of moral perfection. The great prophets of old and the later teachers of Israel are always denouncing empty ritual and the violation of the fundamental laws of humanity and justice. "Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a perennial stream," "Cease to do evil, learn to do good: seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow,"—this is their teaching from age to age. Justice and mercy and love are to characterise the dealings of the Jew with his fellow-creatures from the highest to the lowest, to the humblest, even to the animal creation. There are definite injunctions laid down urging tender consideration for animals. Bond-servants were to be safeguarded from oppression and wrong. Strangers, alien sojourners in the land of Israel, were to be

loved and cared for. The constant appeal to the Jew is, "You have been strangers, you have been persecuted, you have suffered, you know the misery of being strangers in a strange land. Remember your sufferings and inflict not the same sufferings on others. Be kind to the stranger." Strange reversal of the Lex Talionis, Eye for eye which is supposed to characterise Jewish Law! The enemy was not to be excluded from the benefits of fellowship. "If two men seek thy help, and one is thy enemy, help him first." The poor and helpless are to receive special consideration. The Jew is urged to remember those more unfortunate than himself in all his joys, and he is commanded not only to rejoice with his household, but to see that the poor and the stranger, the fatherless and the widow rejoice with him. Delicate consideration was to be shown in performing this duty, so that the poor and unfortunate may not be put to shame in public. Usury is forbidden for it connotes oppression, and means nothing less than taking advantage of the distress of a fellow-creature. A usurer is spoken of as a denier of Israel's God.

A Jew is to embody all this and more in his life in his own land, and something much more than this in an alien land among an alien people where he has to bear witness to the truth and holiness of a holy God. For an act of irreligion and a violation of the moral law, constitutes to the Jew a desecration and profanation of the holy name of

God. And how can a people bear witness to a holy God who are not themselves holy? Wherever the Jew might go, he is to be of the disciples of Aaron, seeking peace and pursuing it, seeking the peace of the city whithersoever the Lord causeth him to be carried away captive.

Jewish teachers had a great belief in human nature, and they placed a very high standard of perfection before the people. The moral urge in them was fostered and fanned into a flame by the prophets, and was kept alive by later teachers. The history of the race has been thirty-five centuries of moral discipline. And Jewish homes have always been ideal centres of purity and holiness. Jews have always been peaceful, law-abiding citizens even where the law of the land has been unjust and cruel to them. Jewish philanthropy is everywhere well-known. Jewish industry and intelligence has everywhere contributed to the welfare of his adopted motherland. Jewish ethics have been weighed in the balances of Jewish history, and they have not been found wanting.

The God of Israel is holy, therefore Israel is to be a holy nation. But the Jew is not to be holy for himself or unto himself alone. A holy God, a holy people, is to culminate in a holy world. The Jews believe that they were chosen, set apart from the rest of the peoples of the world, not for their own glory, not even for the glory of their God, but so

that through them the whole earth may be full of the knowledge of God and of His glory.

Judaism has been charged with being a particularistic and selfish religion. It is pointed out that it speaks of Israel as a chosen nation, and of God as Israel's God. It is well to remember here what Israel believes itself to be chosen for. It is to proclaim the one God to the nations of the world and to establish God's holy kingdom on the earth. Election of Israel has never meant the rejection of the rest of mankind. Rather is Israel elected for the sake of mankind. Israel believes, it is true, that there is a peculiar and special relation between itself and God, but it is not so much "a relation of privilege as that of service." Israel as the chosen nation, chosen to publish eternal truths to the nations, is more severely dealt with and its iniquities are more severely punished than any other nation in the world. How else could it live up to its high destiny? "You only have I known of all the nations of the world, therefore will I visit upon you your iniquities." No, Israel cannot claim indulgence as the chosen of God, *Noblesse oblige*. As the Elect of God it has taken up responsibilities on its shoulders. To fit Israel for its high destiny it has again and again been chastised and punished. Israel is beloved of God: Israel must not be too unworthy of God's love. Israel has been chosen for a noble task: Israel must be prepared for it. God must

redeem Israel outwardly as well as inwardly for His own Name's sake.

The whole nation is consecrated to God's service. "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," for Israel is to be a "light unto the nations." "Ye are my witnesses and my servants whom I have chosen."

When Israel takes upon itself the responsibility it also accepts "suffering as its portion in the world. Whatever else Israel may have won for itself it has won suffering." Whatever Israel has won for itself, it has won through suffering. Israel has been tried and proved in the crucible of suffering. "He is despised and rejected of men. A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." This has been the history of the Jew. The election of Israel has meant an "election for suffering," so that the truth might spread through his living example. As the servant of God he is chosen for suffering, for continual martyrdom, so that through his suffering the world might be led to righteousness. "In thee shall all the nations of the world be blessed."

This belief has been the strength of Judaism under persecution and martyrdom. A small people, scattered among the mighty nations of the world, despised, rejected, oppressed, it has maintained its ground to this day because of its firm belief in its mission, "Ye are my witnesses that I am the Lord."<sup>1</sup> This belief has been at once the cause of their suffer-

ing and their strength in suffering. Israel believes that it is suffering so that the world may one day be led to righteousness and truth.

So, Judaism is a religion of hope. It looks forward to a time when mankind will have accepted the one God, who is the God of truth and righteousness, Who desires nothing but mercy, justice and love from man. In those days the whole earth will be holy. The abiding peace and concord of those days are described in beautiful poetic imagery by the prophets of Israel. Israel is looking forward to this, a holy world, and this is what Israel believes it is chosen to work for.

To conclude. Israel believes in one God, and that God a holy God: Israel believes that it is dedicated to the service of God, to be a holy people because its God is holy. Israel also believes that it is chosen and set apart so that it may lead people to righteousness and truth, so that the whole world may be holy.

A holy God, a holy people, a holy world,—that is the Jewish Trinity, that is the essence of Judaism.

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## **The Ideals of the Prarthana Samaj.**

[Mr. Y. V. Bhandarkar, B.A., LL.B.]

Sixty years have rolled on since sixteen earnest souls founded the Prarthana Samaj and began the spiritual worship of the Lord. They sowed the seed, it sprang up, and well we might say after these sixty years that the young plant promises to grow into a big tree deeply and widely rooted in the soil of this land. It has weathered many storms, survived so many calamities, and still it has retained its vitality which inspires the present workers to go on with their holy task. No doubt the Samaj has lost its great and shining lights. We shall no longer hear within the walls of its Mandir the slow rolling voice of Ranade expounding the Bhagwat, the deep assertive tone of Bhandarkar bearing witness to the intense spiritual insight of Tukaram, or the appealing rhetoric of Chandavarkar reconciling the spiritual wisdom of the East and West. But the foundation was laid on the solid rock of truth and holiness. The Samaj was established for the Lord, for His glory, in search of His truth and love. And the Lord has not allowed His work to suffer, though He called away his mighty sons. New souls are



coming in. New preachers are rising up and delivering the message of the Samaj. The work and responsibility of the movement are growing. The latest additions to its activities, our schools are breaking new fields. The life-saving work at Pandharpur is rapidly increasing, and we are on our way to open an orphanage in the suburbs of Bombay. The movement is steadily and surely coursing on, and we glorify the Lord and ask in wonder 'whither oh, whither !'

Every new soul that comes in fills us with joy, for he comes in as a witness to the working of the spirit, that truth has prevailed and darkness dispelled. Truth is with us and it would take possession of the hearts of our brethren around us, but for the enormous impediments that it has to overcome before it can reach the inner man. In this ancient land of ours traditions of thousands of years' growth envelope the minds of men and make them incapable of thinking and feeling for themselves. Beliefs that are no longer tenable in the present advanced state of human knowledge are still fondly cherished. Mythology is regarded as history, and by constant repetition in Kirtans and Puranas mythological incidents strike more real than historical events. The intellect, weakened by the prevalence of numerous superstitions, takes in every year new irrational and credulous beliefs of either indigenous or foreign growth, and this in spite of the spread of education. One witnesses so often strange psychological

phenomena where one head carries rank scepticism and the most credulous beliefs in two waterlight compartments. It is therefore a great spiritual triumph when all these obstacles are overcome and the emancipated reason and conscience enable a soul to see the light of truth and accept the same. We witness this highly significant spiritual fact when a member makes the declaration in the Mandir, and the slow but steady flow opens up a grand vision of what is going to be in time to come, when these examples of independence of personal convictions are generally followed and acted upon. We see at present little original thought. We deck ourselves with borrowed feathers that so often makes us look ridiculous. And all this is because we think as others think or as somebody thought in the past, or as people around us think. But when we feel that God has blessed us with his light that we may see, and that he urges us on to guide our footsteps by that light, we refuse to be dictated to and begin to assert the independence of our reason, and its right to test every thought that offers itself for our assent. This self-confidence, born of and strengthened by the conviction that the divine light is with us, would certainly revive the ancient glory of this land for freedom and boldness of thought, and thus enable it to give its proper co-operation in the progress of human thought.

This determination to tread the path that is illuminated by the inner divine light is the central

idea, the key of the religion of the Prarthana Samaj. प्रेमसूत्र दोरी । नेतो तिकडे जातो परि ॥ मनं सहित वाचा काया । अवघे दिले देवराया ॥ With complete surrender to the Divine will, we go where God leads us by the strings of love. With this key in our hand we can open the various aspects of that religion. We are often called eclectics; that we do not confine ourselves to one book, but rely on all scriptures, the Bible, the Koran or the Gita. But that is exactly where the glory and greatness of the religion of the Samaj lie. Our vision is liberal and as broad as humanity. We do not believe that God has revealed himself to one people or one community. But all his children have seen him, though from different points of view, and every one of these points of view is equally edifying. We will explore all these revelations with the inner light, and heartily welcome the truth disclosed thereby. That will give out one harmonious system of thought welded by the inner light of truth, righteousness and love. We are thus led to the recognition of the dignity of all human souls, and their essential unity. They are all children of God, and he has loved them all, and is anxious to uplift them all. If the people on this earth are ever to realise their brotherhood, it is through this liberal attitude of mind inspired by the religion of the Samaj. That attitude opens up a grand vision of the entire disappearance of the disputes and differences of creeds which divide man from man, and of the loving recognition by all men that they are brothers, the

children of one God who loves them all. In the present situation of the world this may appear a mere play of the imagination. But the faith in us asserts that humanity shall come to it in course of time. It may not be given to us to know when, but we are assured whither the faith of the Samaj will take us, to peace and good will on earth.

But men have got narrow visions, they look to their country and the men dwelling therein; and all their efforts are directed to making their country great. They say their country is fallen. It is a dependency dominated by foreigners. But it is well said that all people get the government they deserve. The country is rent asunder by all sorts of divisions, of race, religion, creed, caste and sub-caste. A large number of people, one is ashamed to say, are untouchables to the rest. There is very little of national outlook. A man in power would use it for the aggrandisement of his particular community, ignoring the interest of the country. Now the Samaj values every human being as God's child. As it is impossible to conceive of God making any distinction between his children, some being his favourites and others not, so his followers make no distinction between man and man. To them nobody is untouchable. Everybody is as dear as life. When in due course of time the people of this land imbibe these ideas from the Samaj, they will cease to make distinctions, dissolve all divisions and unite as one people. The Samaj in fact aspires to do for

the whole of India, what the saints of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did but imperfectly do for Maharashtra. They softened the distinctions of castes, but did not eradicate them. They made men more pious and God-fearing. But the saints gave out their personal opinions. Those opinions were never acted upon except perhaps by the saints themselves. There was no organization to continue their message and realise it in practice. Hence as soon as their influence disappeared all the evils reappeared with renewed vigour. The Samaj is fully aware of these defects in that movement of Maharashtra saints, and taking good care to avoid them. It strongly insists on a religious life and emphasises that practice must be entirely in harmony with precept. It has organised itself so that its religion may continue to spread freely and be handed down to generations to come. Thus shall the Samaj make the people more and more to realise the presence of God, bring them under Divine influence, make them Godfearing, great men of character, who will boldly see the truth, fearlessly proclaim it, and dauntlessly act upon it. When the men are great, the nation is great. And whatever people on Earth see God and follow his lead shall be great ever and anon.

We shall fix our eye on God and explore all fields of human activity येथूनियां ठाव । अवघे लक्षायाचे भाव ॥ The Prarthana Samaj gave the lead in matters of social reform, and the members are

social reformers not from any considerations of utility or prudence, but because the love-strings of God draw them thereto. They found women treated with injustice and not given their due place in society. Raja Ram Mohan Roy stopped *sati*. Those who came after him took up the movement of women's education. The Samaj has always felt that if men are the sons of God, women are his daughters, and the daughters are as dear to the Father as the sons. We cannot therefore withhold any right or privilege from the daughters. They must therefore have the highest education that circumstances permit. It is in this religious spirit that the members of the Samaj have approached all the questions about the position of women and their place in society. Here one may recall with pride how women have come to take their proper place in the Samaj movement. There was a time when few women attended the divine services in the Mandir, and those who did, sat in the gallery. After many years some found courage to sit in the Hall. But still their number was small. But the last twenty years saw a wonderful change. Since then women have begun to attend in numbers the worship in the Mandir. And now they conduct the Divine Service. They also give valuable help in conducting the Samaj movement and collect funds to finance it. The outside world has but superficially caught this spirit of equality, but true equality will only come when the religious spirit in which the Samaj is working takes

hold of the public mind. The same is the case with regard to the other questions of social reforms. They are taken up as dictated by divine righteousness and love.

The Samaj has not yet turned to the problem of industry and economics. But when with the increase of strength it comes to tackle them, it will be led there by the same love-strings of God. It will strive to see that justice is done to all, that all persons whether labourers, capitalists, manufacturers, merchants or consumers shall get their due share of the good things of the earth, and that there is equality of opportunity to all. There are people who are at present working at these problems. But for want of true religious spirit the work has given rise to much bitterness and hatred, and made the solution of the problems more difficult than before. And the events in different countries confirm the conviction that the economic antagonisms will never be reconciled till both the contending parties are imbued with more love and charity, till there is more of brotherliness in them and till each side, instead of standing on its rights, is anxious to do what it can for the other. This is the religious spirit which a body like the Prarthana Samaj can give to the country and the world and it alone will bring peace to the world. May we soon have the men and the resources to labour in these vineyards of the Lord!

And we the members of the Prarthana Samaj, shall carry this religious spirit in our private life, in our family, in our avocations and professions. We shall be the same always and everywhere, and we shall thus ennoble and elevate all those with whom we come in contact. Ours shall be a holy and lovely domestic life. When out of home we shall overcome all ungodly and impious things, all hatred and bitterness by holiness and love. That is what the Lord demands of us, and we shall gladly respond to the call, for it is joy and blessedness to obey the Lord.

But whither are all these things tending to, this assertion of the religious spirit in all the domains of life. Well, to a revolution which man has hardly ever seriously thought of; to an utter change in the values of things. At present men are madly running after material wealth, and hoarding it for their personal enjoyment or that of their descendants. The spiritual era which the religious spirit will usher will make men value spirituality as the sole end and aim of their life to the disregard of sensual pleasure and happiness. They will find that sacrifice and suffering bring them into close contact with the ultimate Reality of life, and offer great spiritual treasure, by deepening their faith in God and accelerating their complete surrender to his will; that holiness and purity of heart give joy indescribable by the constant communion with God thereby promoted; that love is an invaluable divine gift,



and to serve with hearts filled with that divine love is a privilege and blessing for which men ought always to thank the Lord. How different will it all be from our present world full of competitions rivalries, jealousies, exploitations and self-seeking. That will be the day when the Kingdom of God will come on earth and his will be done by all men readily obeying the divine impulse in them. That is the goal you reach, when discarding all things you are determined to follow wherever He leads you by the "love strings." Whither Oh, whither ! To the Kingdom of God on earth say we.

Thus do men tend towards the Kingdom of God, when they fix their eyes on Him and, completely surrendering to His will, do His will on earth. That is what God desires men to do, to do His will on earth and be His willing instruments in achieving the great goal ; and He has endowed them with faculties of reason and conscience so that they may clearly see what they ought to do here on earth. The religion of the Samaj calls on men to do this duty. People are at times so absorbed in thoughts of what is to happen to them after this life, whether they will go to heaven or hell, attain mukti or salvation, or go on with infinite or finite progress, as to neglect the duties of the present life. We are called upon to act here and now, and we will obey the call and without doubt we shall safeguard ourselves hereafter by so doing. This is the proper attitude of a servant of God to which the religious spirit

of the Samaj tends. In that religion there is no room for what may be called spiritual selfishness, that unhealthy attitude of mind which makes men self-centred, constantly thinking of their individual souls, as if they owed nothing to their society and had no duty towards other souls, and withholds them from their appointed task in this world. The Father does not wish His children to worry themselves about the hereafter, for He wants them to be His soldiers to fight the battle of His truth here and now; which fight ennobles their souls and assures them their hereafter.

To discharge that duty we must be in constant communion with God. Without that communion we shall be slaves of our worldly desires, for want of any higher principle to guide us. It is only when in prayer and contemplation we realize the presence of God that we find our spiritual self, as an active agent able to control and guide our appetites and impulses in conformity with the divine principles of truth, righteousness and love. It is then that there is a new birth, as it were, in a new world where our whole outlook is changed. This awakening, though faint and short-lived in the beginning, becomes vivid and continuous with the determination of a devoted will. It is only with such close association with Divinity that we see the path we ought to tread and know our mission in this world. This association with divinity in all that we say and do constitutes the religion of the Prarthana.

Samaj. That religion is always with us and must dominate all our thoughts, feelings and actions. Religion is life. We have to live religion. We must be conscious in all our working moments that we are in the presence of God and act in this world as impelled on by Him. We shall thus feel that God is with us, before us, and behind us. The devotees are thus bold and fearless to do their duty, because they feel that they are backed by the power of the All-powerful; they are so loving and merciful in their service of humanity, for they feel the love of the All-loving pouring through their hearts.

Whither then does the religion of the Samaj lead us? With complete surrender to the will of God to strength and power and holiness and love in the inner world, pushing on to the Kingdom of God in the world outside.

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## **Buddhism and Modern Thought.**

[Mr. Keshav Appa Padhye, B.A., LL.B.]

While reason and science are going hand in hand in modern times and have been successfully and wonderfully tapping the resources of nature for the material comforts of humanity, it is paradoxical that in matters of religion, we have to fall back upon the old notions embodied in the books of revelation. This means that in understanding or knowing the nature of the Supreme Being, finality was reached centuries ago and that there is no room for further thought. The Revealed Books must be considered as the fountains from which, a seeker after spiritual knowledge must quench his thirst. The teachings in all Revealed Books make it abundantly clear that the attainment of spiritual knowledge is beyond the region of reason, "Faith is the evidence of things not seen". (Hebrews, 11-1).

"The Supreme Being is not fathomable by Reason."

Reason has no scope whatsoever in the attainment of matters spiritual, is the burden of songs of all Revealed Books.

It was reserved for Gautama Buddha to assert the prerogative of reason as the sole criterion of truth. When Gautama Buddha visited the territory of the Kālāma Princes, they said to him. "Lord, Brahmans and sectarian teachers visit us and preach their respective doctrines, each one solemnly asserting that what he teaches is the only truth, and all the rest is false; and on this account, Lord, doubt has overtaken us and we do not know which teaching to accept." The Buddha replied: "It is in the nature of things that doubt should arise. Do not believe in traditions merely because they have been handed down for many generations and in many places; do not believe in any thing because it is rumoured and spoken of by many; do not believe because the written statement of some old sages is produced; do not believe in what you have fancied; thinking that because it is extraordinary, it must have been implanted by a Leva or a wonderful being. After observation and analysis, when it agrees with reason and it conduces to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it." Accordingly, Buddhism requires nothing to be accepted on trust without inquiry. It does not want one to believe in order to understand. To no question does it answer, "it is believable, because it is so absurd;" "it is true, because it is so impossible." It has been truly said that this 'will to believe' plays a more important part in life than reason; moreover, this "will to believe"

is nothing more than 'the will to hold something certain which one feels to be uncertain.' This 'will to believe' is nothing else than the will to deceive, first oneself and then others. It is synonymous with hypocrisy.

If the religion is to be a knowledge and not a creed, a certainty and not a doubt, a real hope in death and not a wail of hysteria, a land of life and not a vague ecstasy, a solidly founded, convincing, coherent definite logical system and not an irresponsible riot of emotions, then *reason*, not superstition, nor mere tradition, nor the 'will to believe' must be its foundation. It is stated in Jatakmalā that one who questions the validity of reason by means of reasoning, deserves his own position.

The following brief analysis of the tenets of Buddhism as given by a scholar will show that they are in perfect unison with the currents of modern thought.

"Buddhism put reason in place of authority; it discarded metaphysical speculations to make room for the practical realities of life; it raised the self-perfected sage to the position of the gods of theology; it set up a spiritual brotherhood in place of hereditary priesthood; it replaced scholasticism by a popular doctrine of righteousness; it infused a cosmopolitan spirit against national exclusiveness. It instils faith stripped from dogmatism. It inspires enthusiasm freed from fanaticism; it gives

strength bereft of violence, it evokes naturalness eschewing materialism; it allows liberty avoiding license; it demands self-sacrifice rejecting asceticism; it inculcates purity discarding austerities; it creates saintliness devoid of morbidity."

This is what Buddhism teaches mankind. It does not recognize dogma, miracle, kismet, fanaticism, caste, communalism, and ceremonialism. In rejecting this new phase of thought based purely on rationalism, India fell a prey to evils which ate up her vitals. India became a garden of rank superstitions which ushered in all the concomitant evils along with it. India soon became caste-ridden, and priest-ridden.

After 12th or 13th century, A. D., a number of saints chiefly drawn from the non-Brahman caste, sprang up in the Deccan who opened the gates of spiritual knowledge to the masses and preached the doctrine of devotion of God as the only means of salvation. But they did not succeed in supplanting the old order of things in Hinduism. In the Punjab, Guru Nanak set up a new religion which while embodying the best in the Hindu religion, drew upon other faiths for infusing new spiritual life.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy had the rare courage in recent times, of overthrowing the authority of Revealed Books and of appealing to reason in matters spiritual. This appeal to reason did not fall upon deaf ears. The intellegentsia in Bengal soon

mustered strong under his banner. While discarding the authority of Revealed Books, he took care not to disrespect them, but to make use of them wherever he thought it necessary. Raja Rama Mohan Roy tried to purge Hinduism of all the crust that had gathered round it for ages. He did not set up a new religion; but presented to the world the best that he could gather from the so-called Revealed Books of the known religions. The whole object of Raja Ram Mohan Roy was that in religious matters, people should not accept anything on trust, but only that which will stand the test of reason and science. Those who had received western culture in the begining of the last century would not rest content with the religious beliefs which were prevalent in Hinduism. The majority of them were inclined either to embrace Christianity or to be free-thinkers. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's New Dispensation came as a panacea for these waverers at this critical juncture. This Dispensation suited the trend of modern thoughts.

In the middle of the last century the same thirst for spiritual knowledge sprang up among a section of the people who had received western culture in the Deccan. Some of them embraced Christianity. The scholastic and clever explanations of Vishnubawa Brahmachari who appeared in Bombay to defend the Hindu Sanatan Dharma, would not carry conviction to the cultured minds.



The promoters of the Prarthana Samaj who had before them the ideal of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, took time by the forelock and started an institution, the first and foremost article of whose Faith was the overthrow of the belief in Revealed Books. While the articles inculcated this tenet with all the force, they did not discard the good things embodied therein. The Hindu society owes a deep debt of gratitude to the Prarthana Samaj that its coming into existence at a psychological moment averted a serious calamity of the conversion of the leading members of Hindu society to Christianity.

Buddhism, as has been stated above, affords a great parallel to the religious activities of Brahmoism and Prarthana Samaj, not only in religious matters, but also in matters affecting the permanent interests of society at large.

The Brotherhood which Lord Buddha preached for the first time in the world, is directly the negation of the existence of caste and communalism. Buddhism regards all human beings on the same level. Any one who follows the Dharma as inculcated by Lord Buddha, secures emancipation. It has no scope for untouchability or for the ideas of superiority or inferiority. Anand, the favourite disciple of Lord Buddha, was barber by caste. Buddhism preached freedom from priestly thralldom and laid great stress on shaping moral character. Thus all the elements in Buddhism are in accord

with the trend of modern thought. If our leaders of modern thought had studied Buddhism in the middle of the last century, they would certainly have given prominence to its excellent teaching in their works.

A charge is levelled against Buddhism that it does not recognize God as the Creator of the Universe. The works on Buddhism do not afford any evidence to support this charge. All that Lord Buddha preached was that every one should try to free himself from the misery and suffering of the world by concentrating his attention on the attainment of what was practical. He deprecated fruitless discussions and speculations.

The problems which face India at the present moment are (1) the removal of untouchability, in other words, establishment of Brotherhood, (2) improvement of the lot of women, (3) freedom of thought in religious matters and (4) the removal of social evils of various kinds such as, drinking, prostitution, gambling, &c. The eight-fold Path of Buddhism aims at the eradication of most of the evils, while the position of women is most satisfactory under Buddhism. Buddhism has another thing to its credit, *viz.*, the insistence on service to humanity. The establishment of hospitals, dissemination of moral instructions among the masses are peculiar to Buddhism. The patronage which Buddhism gave to Art, as evidenced by the Ajanta caves and by a number of other caves scattered

throughout the country, the impetus which it gave to the medical science, as evidenced by the work of Sushruta, Charak and Vagbhata (who are reputed to be Buddhists), afford ample proof that it is a living and optimistic religion. Buddhism looked at from any stand-point is consistent with modern thought for the simple reason that it is based upon rationalism and not on dogmas.

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## **The Philosophy of the Upanishads**

[ The Editor ]

### **I**

It is impossible to fix with certainty the dates of the Upanishads. It is usually assumed that the oldest of them were composed in the period between 1000 B. C. and 300 B. C.; owing to the large number of works which have been produced under the title it is very difficult to distinguish between the canonical and apocryphal Upanishads. Dr. Paul Deussen divides the most important of them into three groups: the first, which he names the Ancient Prose Upanishads, comprises Brihadaranyaka, Chandogya, Taitiriyā, Aitareya, Kaushitaki and Kena. The second group which he calls the Metrical Upanishads, consists of Katha, Isha, Swetaswatara, Mundaka and Mahanarayana. The third group consists of later prose Upanishads such as Prasna and Maitreyaniya. The later Atharvaveda Upanishads which are not included in any of the above three groups are not very important with the single exception of Mandukya.

The later Upanishads regarded the earlier ones as a whole and as teaching one doctrine. Badara-

yana, the supposed author of the Vedant Sutras, composed them on the basis of the older Upanishads. He declared that the Brahman (the over-soul) is the first principle of the world, a point on which all Upanishads agreed and added that all Upanishads are worthy of credence. We do not know which of the 108 Upanishads he regarded authentic, and it is from his commentator Sankar alone that we learn their names, but it is doubtful whether Sankar himself followed a reliable tradition: but since Shankar took the trouble of commenting on the ten Upanishads there is every reason to suppose that he regarded these ten as authentic.

If we study these ten Upanishads we find that the thoughts of these texts revolve round two central ideas *viz.* Brahman and Atman. Brahman is the cosmic principle of the universe and Atman the psychical principle in man, and the Upanishads endeavour to prove that these two are one. "Now that which is the essence, in it all that exists has its self. It is the true. It is the self and thou, O Swetketu, art it." (Chandogya.-6.8.7.) "In the beginning there was nothing but Brahman. It is the origin of all that exists. Thus even the gods who were awakened to the knowledge of Brahman became themselves Brahman. And the same is the case with the Rishis and men. That man is ignorant who worships his deity thinking that it is one and he is another." (Brih-1.4.10.)

When the soul that is embodied is taken away and freed from the body, what remains is not the individual soul but the Brahman." (Kath 2.5.4.)

"He who knows the highest Brahman always becomes that Brahman. In his race none is born ignorant of Brahman. He masters grief and is free from evil: and also being free from the fetters of the heart, he becomes immortal." (Mundaka 3.2.9.)

"Bhu, Bhuvā, Svā, these are the three holy interjections. Mahākārya taught a fourth one, *viz.*, Mahas, which is Brahman, which is the self." (Taitirīya, 1.5.1.)

"That which is exalted in the Upanishads above all other names is the highest Brahman. It is the support of the universe. When the students of Brahman understand the principle underlying this world become devoted to, and merged in, the Brahman, free from birth." (Śvetāśvatara, 1.7.)

"He who knows that indestructible being, gets that which is the highest and indestructible, without a shadow, without a body, without colour bright,—yes, o friend he who knows that becomes all knowing, becomes all." (Prasna, 4.2.)

From the above quotations it is evident that whatever other doctrines the Upanishads teach, the doctrine of the unity of man and God remains central. The transcendent conception of God held

in the Rigveda is here changed into an immanent one. The infinite is not other than the finite, but is in the finite. Thus the identity between the subject and the object was realised in India long before any European philosopher was born. Says Deussen, "If we strip this thought of the various forms, figurative to the highest degree and seldom extravagant, under which it appears in the Vedant (Upanishads) texts and fix our attention upon it solely in its philosophical simplicity as the identity of God and the soul, the Brahman and the Atman, it will be found to possess a significance reaching far beyond the Upanishads, their time and country; nay we claim for it an inestimable value for the whole race of mankind. We are unable to look into the future, we do not know what revelations and discoveries are in store for the restlessly inquiring human spirit, but one thing we may assert with confidence—whatever new and unwonted paths the philosophy of the future may strike out, this principle will remain permanently unshaken, and from it no deviation can possibly take place. If ever a general solution is reached of the great riddle, which presents itself to the philosopher in the nature of things, all the more clearly the further our knowledge extends the key can only be found where alone the secrets of nature lie open to us from within, that is to say in our innermost self. It was here that for the first time the original thinkers of the Upanishads, to their

immortal honour, found it when they recognised our Atman, our inmost individual being, as the Brahman, the inmost being of universal nature and of all her phenomena." This identity between Brahman and Atman is not something given, but is to be achieved dynamically through progressive development. It is only when the Atman rises above the individual self-consciousness that it can become at one with Brahman. This means that although the soul of man is of the same spirit as the ultimate Reality, it must first break through the bonds of individuality and achieve freedom before it can become one with that Reality. This insistence on the unity of the Atman and the Brahman necessarily leads us to believe that the Upanishads teach pure and unqualified monism which does not take into account the reality of separate existences; Prof. Radhakrishnan, however, thinks otherwise. "It is not an abstract monism," he says, "that the Upanishads offer us. There is difference but also identity. Brahman is infinite not in the sense that it excludes the finite, but in the sense that it is the ground of all finites. It is eternal not in the sense that it is something beyond all time, as though there were two states temporal and eternal, one of which superseded the other, but that it is the timeless reality of all things in time. The absolute is neither the infinite nor the finite, the self nor its realisation, the one life nor its varied expressions, but is the real, including and transcending the self and its



realisation ; life and its expression. It is the spiritual spring which breaks, blossoms and differentiates itself into numberless finite centres. The Brahman means growth, and is suggestive of life, motion and progress, and not death, stillness or stagnation. The ultimate Reality is described as *sat*, *chit* and *anand*—existence, consciousness and bliss—knowledge, power and action are of its nature. It is self-caused. Taittiriya says: 'Brahman is existence, consciousness and infinity. It is a positive reality, 'full is that, full is this.' It is obvious that the ultimate reality is not thought, nor force, nor being, exclusively, but the living unity of essence and existence, of the ideal and the real, love and beauty." This is by far the most brilliant defence of the Unity-in-Difference doctrine which the Upanishads are supposed to teach. But we should hesitate to accept it as the true interpretation of the Upanishadic philosophy for the simple reason that the various passages quoted above do not lend their support to it ; on the contrary they seem to favour the monistic interpretation which is generally associated with the name of the celebrated Sankar. Shankar's interpretation appears all the more reasonable when we remember (and this seems to have escaped Prof. Radhakrishnan's notice) that the sages of the Upanishads approached the problem of reality purely from the point of cognition. They looked upon reality as being primarily an object of knowledge, and the moment we approached any problem purely from an intellectual

point of view, we very often tend to obliterate all distinctions which lie at the root of that problem and reduce it to a proposition of bare identity. Therefore although the present writer acknowledges with gratitude the immortal discovery of these ancient sages which Deussen describes in such glowing terms, he is not prepared to admit that they really solved the problem by telling us that the Brahman and Atma are one. Their identity does not explain the imperfections which separate the Atman from the Brahman, nor does it tell us how and why the sense of an individual existence arose. In any case the sages of the Upanishads have failed to do full justice to the facts of psychical individuality. Prof. Radhakrishnan was obviously aware of this defect and he, like Ramanuja, tried to remove it by introducing the doctrine on Unity-in-Difference; but as we have said before, we have great hesitation in accepting it as the doctrine of the writers of the Upanishads.

## II

In 1894, Max Muller delivered three lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy at the Royal Institution. At the commencement of the first lecture he said, "I am fully aware of the difficulties which I shall have to encounter in trying to enlist your interest, nay if possible, your sympathy, for an ancient system of Indian Philosophy, the Vedanta Philosophy. It is no essay task even within the walls of this scienti-

fic institution to obtain a hearing for a mere system of philosophy, whether new or old. The world is too busy to listen to purely theoretical speculations; it wants exciting experiments and, if possible, tangible results. And yet I remember one who ought to be well-known to all of you in this place, I remember our dear friend Tyndall, rejoicing over a new theory, because, as he said "Thank God, it will not produce any practical results; no one will ever be able to take out a patent and make money by it." Leibniz, I suppose, took no patent for his Differential Calculus, nor Sir Isaac Newton for his theory of gravitation. Trusting in that spirit of Tyndall, which has been so long the presiding spirit of this busy laboratory of thought, I hope that there may be some friends and admirers of his left within these walls, who are willing to listen to mere speculations—speculations which will never produce any tangible results, in the ordinary sense of the term for which certainly no one can take out a patent, or hope, if he has secured it, to make any money by it:—and these speculations are bound up with the highest and dearest interest of our life." We venture to think that this unqualified praise of the Vedanta Philosophy is not wholly due to the fact that Max Muller belonged to that group of Oriental scholars who welcomed the system of Vedanta with the simple enthusiasm of a child which delights in a new toy. There is something very grand about the fundamental conceptions of Vedanta otherwise

Schopenhauer would not have said, "In the whole world, there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death." Sir William Jones remarks, "It is impossible to read the Vedanta or the many fine compositions in illustration of it, without believing that Pythagoras and Plato derived their sublime theories from the same fountain as the sages of India." Victor Cousin says, "When we read with attention the poetical and philosophical monuments of the East, above all those of India, which are beginning to spread in Europe, we discover there many a truth: and truths so profound, and which make such a contrast with the meanness of the results at which the European has sometimes stopped that we are constrained to bend the knee before the philosophy of the East and to see in the cradle of the human race the native land of the highest philosophy." And lastly we have Frederick Schlegel remarking, "It cannot be denied that the early Indians possessed the knowledge of the true God; all their writings are replete with sentiments and expressions noble, clear, and severely grand, as deeply conceived and reverentially expressed as in any human language in which men have spoken of their God." And again, "Even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans, the idealism of reason, as it is set forth by Greek philosophers, appears in comparison with the abundant light and vigour of Oriental idealism like a feeble

Promethean spark in the full flood of heavenly glory of the noon-day sun, faltering and feeble, and ever ready to be extinguished." Such is the high esteem in which the Hindu philosophy is held by Oriental scholars in Europe. Now we shall see what precisely is meant by the Vedanta philosophy of which the scholars speak in such eulogistic terms.

"Vedanta," says Max Muller, "is clearly the native philosophy of India." It is true that the word Vedanta does not occur in the older Upanishads, yet the Vedantic thoughts contained in the Upanishads gave the first impulse to systematic philosophising in India. The Vedanta means the end or the last portion of the Veda and since Upanishads are supposed to be the last portions of the Vedas, they are not infrequently called the Vedanta. The Uttara-Mimamsa of Badarayan is also called the Vedanta Sutras and that is because the system of Badarayan is supposed to represent the Upanishadic philosophy more faithfully than any other system. As to Badarayana, the author of these Vedanta Sutras, we know next to nothing. He has been very often identified with Vyasa, the collector of the Mahabharata, but without sufficient evidence. Shankar, who has written an extensive commentary on the Vedanta Sutras, mentions Vyas as the author of the Mahabharata, but never suggests that the authors of the Sutras and the great epic poem are one.

Shankar belonged to the eighth century A. D. and Bodhayana wrote a commentary which belongs to an earlier date. It was this commentary—that was subsequently followed by Ramanuja in the eleventh century. Max Muller says, “It is quite possible that Bodhayana like Ramanuja represented a more ancient and more faithful interpretation of Badarayana’s Sutras and that Shankar’s, in its unflinching monism, is his own rather than Badarayana’s.” We have already seen in the preceding paragraphs that the fundamental idea of the Upanishads is that the Brahman is the Atman; we do not find in any of the earlier texts any attempt made to distinguish between the soul and God: and if there was any difference between the two, it was, according to the Upanishads, more apparent than real. We do not, therefore, think that the rigid monistic philosophy was Shankar’s rather than that of the Upanishads and the Vedanta Sutras. Shankar became a monist because he knew that the sacred books taught monism; and the qualified monism of later philosophers like Ramanuja is due to not a very successful attempt to find a philosophical basis for Bhakti. The main proposition of Shankar that the Brahman is the only reality and all else is Maya, or illusion is challenged by Ramanuja on the ground that although the Brahman is the supreme Reality, the individual souls and the world being its modes (Prakaras) in which that Reality expresses

itself, are also equally real. Brahman, adds Ramanuja, is not only the Supreme Reality, but it is also full of love and compassion. This Brahman, he subsequently identifies with Vishnu and thus he tried to reconcile the ancient philosophy of the Upanishads and the Vedanta Sutras to the demands of Bhakti. The difficulties incident to the theistic philosophy of Ramanuja cannot be dealt with in this essay as it is concerned only with the fundamentals of Upanishadic philosophy.

This Vendantic or monistic philosophy can be given in the words of a Hindu writer (Max Muller's translation) :—

‘ In one half verse I shall tell you what has been taught in thousands of volumes : Brahman is true, the world is false, the soul is Brahman and nothing else.’

And again—

‘ There is nothing worth gaining, there is nothing worth enjoying, there is nothing worth knowing, except Brahman alone, for he who knows Brahman is Brahman’.

If we ask what is precisely the nature of Brahman, the Vedanta answers, ‘Neti,’ ‘Neti,’ meaning not this, not that ; Brahman can be defined only negatively. We hear an echo of this thought in Bradley’s “Absolute.” To Bradley the Absolute is essentially super-relational. It is a self-consistent whole and

free from inner contradictions. Similarly Brahman is Nirguna, that is, without any attributes. It is free from everything which is conceivable by the human understanding. In other words we cannot reach this attributeless Brahma by knowledge because whatever knowledge we get is the knowledge of appearances or phenomena as Kant would call it. We can reach Brahman only by the practice of Yoga whereby we are able to break away from every human tie and attain passionless state in which we realise our identity with Brahman. 'Aham Brahma Asmi'. I am Brahman; this is Moksha or salvation and it is possible only to those who are initiated into the doctrines of Vedanta. Those who are still groping in darkness of ignorance may worship Ishvara, God as the Creator, but he ceases to be real the moment the mind becomes free from ignorance and realises the truths of the Vedanta. The fruit of this realisation is Anand or Joy.

Thus affirming the sole reality of Brahma and identifying it with the Atman is the very height of transcendental idealism that it is possible for the human mind to conceive. The only system in the West which approaches the system of Vedanta is the philosophy of Spinoza. To Spinoza thought and extension, the absolute antagonism of which caused so much uneasiness to the Cartesian philosophers were but two modes of the same Reality. To the



Vedantist the play and the interplay in the world is nothing but the activity of Maya by means of which Brahman becomes the Creator and creates the things as a matter of *Lila*. This Maya is all-powerful and it is very difficult for ordinary mortals to realise its illusory character. Only the Vedantist who knows that nothing is real except Brahman, can become free from its influence.

### III

Let us now pass on to the Sankhya philosophy as expounded in the aphorisms attributed to Kapila. The main thesis of the Vedanta philosophy, *viz.* that Atman is Brahman gives rise to a further question; What is the difference between Atman and Brahman and the world due to? We are immediately answered that all the differences that we see existing in the world are only appearances and when we penetrate this veil of appearances, we find that Brahman is the only Reality and Atman is Brahman. This answer was not quite satisfactory to Kapila, the reputed author of the Sankhya Karika, who takes up the problem where it was left by the Vedantists and shows that if the Atman which he calls Purusha, is real then there is no such thing as Brahman. He also shows that all our mental and physical activities are due to the working of matter (Prakriti), and the real ego or the Purusha has nothing to do with them. But the ego through ignorance believes that he is the agent of

these activities whereas in reality he is only a passive beholder of the dance of Prakriti. All his experiences of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain are really the experiences which are the outcome of his contact with Prakriti. The moment he frees himself from the influence of Prakriti, and isolates himself he becomes free and attains bliss (Kaivalya). This state of Kaivalya is very much the same as the state of Anand of which the Vedantists speak, and the Purusha is the same as the Atman, so that we have the Vedant philosophy with the slight difference which consists in the fact that whereas the Vedanta recognises one supreme cosmic principle and affirms its identity with the psychical principle in man, this very affirmation leads Kapila to do away with the cosmic principle and emphasise the sole reality of the psychical principle alone. The very consistency and rigidity with which the identity of Atman and Brahman is asserted has resulted in the conviction that postulating any cosmic principle is unnecessary.

Kapila's system is frankly dualistic. He accepts the reality of the soul and unlike the Vedantists, he accepts the reality of the world or nature. All knowledge, says Kapila, in effect, involves the known and the knower, the subject and the object. Kant's theory of knowledge also involves the subject and the object, but according to Kant, in the act of knowing, the subject is more active than the object,

in so far it has to provide the forms of sensibility and the categories of the understanding which alone render knowledge possible ; while according to Kapila the object or the Prakriti is more active than the subject and even the categories of the understanding are the product of Prakriti, created in a process of evolution. The subject or the Purusha as remarked above is really something which is beyond experience and as such is not capable of being brought within the limits of intelligence. What the ultimate character of the soul is, Kapila does not care to enquire as the enquiry would suggest the capability on the part of human intelligence to solve the problem. But he is willing to accept the description of the soul that he finds in the scriptures. The Swetaswatara Upanishad describes soul as "Witness, intelligent, alone and void of the three qualities, without parts, without action and without change, blameless and unsullied." The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says, "Nothing adheres to soul." The object or Prakriti, Kapila regards as equally transcendent like the ego and describes it only negatively, as the non-manifest, indiscreet and so on. How the indiscreet matter came into contact with an equally indiscreet ego and evolved this world with its infinite but discreet variety, Kapila does not tell us any more than the Vedantists who took refuge in the doctrine of Maya. Thus he, like the Vedantists ignores the fundamental fact of psychical individual-

ity in spite of the fact that he recognises the separate and independent existences of the Purushas. The only real distinction, therefore, between the Vedant and Sankhya systems lies in the fact that the Vedant ignores and the Sankhya recognises, the eternal reality of the Atman as well as that of Prakriti or the world. Otherwise both the systems teach ultimately the same doctrines that constitute the fundamentals of Hindu philosophy.

#### IV

We have seen how the Sankhya system has done away with the necessity of postulating a cosmic principle by asserting the sole reality and the self-sufficiency of the individual Purushas. The Sankhya system reminds us strongly of the Monadology of Leibnitz. The only difference between these two systems is that whereas Purushas according to Kapila and Monads according to Leibnitz, are self-sufficient and capable of evolving from within, Kapila retains the apparently atheistic character of his system while Leibnitz introduces God as the Monad of Monads and bases their mutual relations upon the law of pre-established harmony. We find, however, that Patanjali tried to remove this deficiency from the Sankhya system by introducing Ishvara (God). The end proposed by Sankhya is, as we have seen, Kaivalya. Patanjali holds that this Kaivalya cannot be acquired by Purusha by himself. A particular kind of Ishvara

or God is necessary for purposes of contemplation. Thus the Sankhya system assumed under the influence of Patanjali a theistic character and became thenceforward known as the Yoga philosophy; but it became theistic only in name. Readers are apt to misunderstand the word yoga in connection with Patanjali's system and conclude that since yoga means union, Patanjali speaks of the union between God and the individual souls. Nothing, however, is farther from truth. In Sankhya system the term yoga in the sense of union is meaningless, because apart from the individual Purushas or Monads there is nothing else with which they can seek union. In Yoga philosophy God is introduced not as the supreme object of worship or even knowledge, that is, as an end in himself, but as a means of attaining Kaivalya. The chief emphasis is laid upon ascetic practices and God is to be the object of meditation in so far as He helps his devotee to control his senses and attain the peaceful state of self-absorption.

Thus we have here all the elements of the Upanishadic or Vedantic philosophy stated in different terms. The sages of the Upanishads saw that Reality had two aspects, the cosmic and the psychical, and yet somehow or other these two aspects were really one. How they came to this conclusion, we have no means of ascertaining. The philosophy of these sages has come to us in a finished form, that is, only the results of their

reflections are given to us, but we do not know the process by which these results were reached. We can trace the gradual development of thought in the philosophy of Kant, Hegel, Fichte and other modern writers. We have only to open the biography of any of these philosophers and their whole world of thought is revealed to us. But the thought-process of the writers of the Upanishads seems to us like a sealed box of which we in vain seek the key. Their bold and daring speculations appear to us so extraordinary and marvellous that we credit them with having been inspired with a supernatural wisdom; there would, however, be nothing supernatural about it, if we could only recover their whole process of reasoning. This has been actually tried by philosophers like Badarayana, Kapila and Patanjali. The Upanishadic writers were content with the statement that the Atman and the Brahman were one. This proposition was further expounded by Badarayana who tried to show in what sense they were one, but in doing so he practically ignored the reality of the psychical principle and reduced it to an appearance. This defect was remedied by Kapila who affirmed the reality of the psychical principle but did away with the necessity of recognising the cosmic principle. Then came along Patanjali who subscribed to the Sankhya system *in toto*, but tried to remove from it the reproach of atheism by reintroducing the cosmic principle.

Yet he failed to relate the salvation of man (Kaivalya) to it, because, according to the Sankhya philosophy, Kaivalya did not depend upon the belief or disbelief in the cosmic principle. So Patanjali had to introduce it only as a means to an end. But whatever changes were adopted by these later philosophers, they held fast by the belief that the soul was something which transcended human experience: it was something which was essentially unknown and unknowable. This ghost of the unknown reality was finally laid to rest by the great Gautama Buddha who brought his keen analytical mind to bear upon the problem and showed the psychological absurdity of postulating something unknown and unknowable. He showed that there was neither Brahman, the cosmic principle, nor Atman, the psychical principle, because if there were anything like these they would be known through the ordinary channels of knowledge. Since they cannot be known, the only valid conclusion is that they do not exist. But Buddhism also in its philosophical aspect failed to supply a positive view of life, but its value lies in the fact that but for its trenchant attack upon the dry scholastic and we may add impersonal speculations, the rise of the later theistic systems would not have been possible. Whether these theistic systems really supplied the spiritual needs of men or not is a question which must await further consideration.

## **Conclusion.**

(Mr. V. G. Bhandarkar, President, Bombay Prarthana Samaj)

This series of essays on liberal religious movements of the day, was started with a view to bring together in a succinct form, all the best religious thought which finds expression in the different religious systems of the world. Such juxtaposition of religious ideas, which for the most part, have developed on independent lines of their own, brings prominently before the eye, the common element in them all, as well as the specific differences which characterize each of them. The question then suggests itself : Cannot the common element form a bond of union among followers of the different faiths, the variations being laid to the account of the past history of each and not necessarily false or vital, because they find no place in one's own system of beliefs ; if so, how and when ?

It will be noted that each of these religions has a history of its own which, in main outlines, is much the same. It begins with the appearance of a religious genius and a book which records his message. The message, so delivered, which is far in advance of the current ideas of the people, is readily accepted



as the whole truth about God, man and the method of man's salvation. For the people to whom it was delivered were from the first haunted by a sense of the Infinite, and were striving to be better, to know more and to adapt their surroundings to their needs. Far beyond the finite world in which they live, men imagine an infinite world. Behind phenomena, they see a spirit which controls them and on which they depend for the satisfaction of their desires. Reverence is as natural a human sentiment as love. It awakens the religious sense in them. This religious sense it is that accepts the new revelation as a final solution of all the problems which perplex it and which to all appearance dispenses with a fresh search for truth. Ultimately it proves to be a temporary phase. For the human spirit cannot be called to rest for a long time. With growing religious experience and the advance of philosophical thought and spiritual insight, with further reflection awakened, it may be by contact with other religious beliefs and cultures, new movements arise within the parent body, which without questioning the authority of the scriptures, reinterpret them, reformulate their teachings and set up religious practices and modes of worship as more in consonance with the spirit of the scriptures.

This too is not the final stage in the history of authority in religious matters. Along with the knowledge of God and man, and man's relation to God, the scriptures contain much adventitious matter

based on the ideas of the world of nature, of human society, of morality, art and science, which advancing knowledge renders obsolete. Thereupon a conviction dawns upon the mind that not everything in the sacred writings is of equal authority. This conviction is strengthened when under the guidance of the scientific spirit, the credentials to divine authority of the scriptures are carefully examined and an impartial study of all religions from the lowest to the highest is commenced. Thence a new orientation arises. It now appears that not in one or two places nor at one or two periods of human history has God revealed himself to men but that the process of revelation has been continuous through all human story ; that God is not the merely transcendent God commonly believed, who having created the world leaves it afterwards to take care of itself and only at some future time judges men and rewards and punishes according to their deserts, but that God is immanent in the creation. His presence sanctifies nature, man and human society, wherein he has been revealing himself and not merely in scriptures. He dwells in the hearts of men, warning, guiding, comforting and inspiring them to noble deeds. He is the God of love who is always uplifting men to higher and higher reaches of truth, goodness and holiness. As he has revealed himself in the past and is revealing himself in the present, so will he reveal himself in the future. Hence, there is no finality in any of the scriptures. It further appears that right of free

inquiry is the birth-right of men and no authority however sacred can dispense with the duty of seeking further light in all matters of human thought and endeavour.

When such convictions gain ground in the hearts of men then will a new humility come to birth. All pride of race or religion will disappear and man will regard man, however different his beliefs may be, as a brother and not an enemy or a rival. Then will be the time for co-operation and fraternisation. Not that all varieties of religion will cease to exist for though God is one and Father of all, the modes of his worship need not all be the same. The emotion of divine worship is not called forth by the same mode in all. Something will depend on temper, something on historical or other associations. Silent meditation, congregational worship led by a man of religious fervour, the accompaniment of music, the words of the sacred hymns, rites symbolising a particular episode in the life of a supremely holy personage, these and others like these may be the aids required to attune the spirit to prayer. Such variations may and will continue. But all men alike, whatever the modes they adopt, will worship the same loving Father of all and no man will look askance at another because his mode of worship is different. This is the consummation which all earnest seekers after God will look forward to and do their best to hasten its advent.

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